THE DECREE ON DAILY COMMUNION

A Historical Sketch and Commentary

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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LETTER

FROM

CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL TO THE AUTHOR

Reverend Father,

The Holy Father has charged me to thank your Reverence in his name for the presentation of your book on Frequent and daily Communion, according to the recent instructions of the Holy See contained in the decree "Sacra Tridentina Synodus." As soon as he heard of this book, the Holy Father expressed his lively pleasure at the timely appearance of the work, in which your Reverence has commented on the above-mentioned decree for the use of the faithful and especially of the clergy.

In the desire that this pious work may completely fulfil the devout and praiseworthy intentions of the author, His Holiness, as a proof of his goodwill, has granted him from his heart the apostolic benediction. Allow me to add my own thanks for the copy of the same

work which you have so kindly offered me. In testimony of my most sincere esteem I have the pleasure of signing myself,

Most affectionately in the Lord,

R. CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL.

ROME, *4th June* 1907.

Rev. Fr. JUAN B. FERRERES, S.J.,
Tortosa.

PREFACE

THE exceptional importance of the decree "Sacra Tridentina Synodus" and of other instructions issued by Pius X. in regard to frequent and daily Communion, induced us to comment on them in considerable detail in the review, *Razón y Fe.* The same motive leads us now to publish this commentary separately, principally to meet the needs of the learned and pious clergy both secular and regular of Spain and America.

When decrees are of such a nature that, as in the present case, they mark a new departure in Church discipline, and settle questions debated for more than fifteen centuries by the keenest intellects, and correct in not a few respects opinions taught up to the present by illustrious theologians and eminent saints, it seems not out of place to the best of our ability to enter into a somewhat extended study of these remarkable decrees, and to provide students of canon law with a reliable history of the long controversies which these decrees have happily ended. It is our object to trace these controversies as clearly as possible, to notice the opinions affected

directly or indirectly by the same decrees, and to elucidate the points as to the interpretation of which difficulty is in any way likely to arise in practice.

Such is our intention and our wish in writing this commentary. We have considered also that we can give no greater proof of love and veneration for the Vicar of Christ, than by directing our endeavours to the study of his most wise enactments, and by helping to put them into practice.

The subject is of interest to all the faithful, since to each and every one are addressed the counsels of Pius X. and the favours granted for frequent and daily Communion; but it is of especial interest to the colleges wherein are educated young people of either sex, and to seminaries, since in all these establishments daily Communion should be more especially encouraged; to religious communities also, whether of men or women, whether under solemn or simple vows, since Pius X. addresses himself to them in so special a way that he commands that the text of this decree, translated into the vernacular, should be read in public in these communities that all may understand and practise it; to all parish priests, confessors, and preachers, because in accordance with the instructions of Pius X., they must frequently and earnestly exhort the faithful, so that there may flourish among them daily more and more the most holy practice of frequent and daily Com-

munion, whilst in addition each and every one of the faithful is bound to be guided by the advice of his confessor.

Another source of interest in this subject arises from the fact that there is hardly a single work on moral theology published up to the present time that does not need to be corrected and revised in respect to these decrees. The same may be said of the greater part of the rules, constitutions, devotional and ascetical works, in as far as they deal with frequent Communion. Under such circumstances no one will be surprised at the words addressed to us a few months ago by the learned theologian of one of our most renowned metropolitan sees: "I much desire to see completed and published separately your work on frequent Communion. I am of opinion that everyone who is engaged in the sacred ministry ought to be acquainted with it."

We hope this commentary will meet with as favourable a reception as those we have already published.

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THE DECREE ON DAILY COMMUNION

I

ITS GREAT IMPORTANCE

1. Pius X. advances daily in the course he has traced out for himself to "restore all things in Christ." The decree he has published, dated December 20, 1905, through the Sacred Congregation of the Council, is a brilliant example of his zeal.

2. This decree is remarkable for the clear and simple manner in which it settles once for all a long-standing controversy which seemed destined to be never-ending. It is, too, a decree of great import, penetrating as it does to the innermost recesses of the supernatural life, the soul of Catholicism, the fountain-head of grace and of the Christian virtues, the hidden source of strength for the Church of Christ, at once invincible and irresistible.

II

EXPLANATORY PART OF THE DECREE: (*a*) DOGMATIC. (*b*) HISTORICAL

3. The decree has two parts: the one explanatory, and the other disciplinary. It is under this latter aspect that it is more remarkable, and it is apparently destined to take its place in the promised revision of canon law.

4. The first part of the decree contains two sections, in the former of which (viz. 15 and 16) are laid down the doctrinal premisses which go to show that the practice of daily Communion is worthy of all praise. We have, first the words of the Council of Trent,[1] which manifest a desire that the faithful should communicate daily during the Holy Sacrifice. Secondly, the words of Christ[2] Himself when He compared the Eucharist to bread and to the manna, giving us to understand that, as each day we partake of bread, and as the Israelites in the desert daily eat of the manna for the support of the body, so it was His wish that the faithful should receive every day this bread from heaven for the support of the life of the soul. Thirdly, the words too of the *Our Father*, in which Christ teaches us to call the Blessed Sacrament *our daily bread*, since by these words, if we

[1] Sess. 22, ch. 6. [2] John vi. 59.

follow the almost unanimous interpretation of the Fathers, is meant not only the daily nourishment of the body, but principally daily Communion.[1]

5. It is not only the honour of God and the reception of His Sacred Body in reward for a virtuous life that actuates this wish of Christ and His Church, but a still more cogent reason is found in the fact that by this union of ourselves with God in Holy Communion, we gain new strength to conquer concupiscence, to free ourselves from lesser faults, and to avoid mortal sin.

6. The second section of the first part of the decree is historical in character. It begins by recalling the fact that early Christians practised daily Communion, as the Acts of the Apostles bear witness, and that this practice, according to the testimony of the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers, was continued in succeeding centuries.

7. It then goes on to show that when the piety of the faithful grew cold, and especially when the Jansenist heresy had spread, there arose controversies as to the dispositions required for frequent Communion. Some required dispositions more perfect and more difficult to obtain than others. The result of this was that but few people were considered fit

[1] Roman Catechism, part 2; *De Euch.*, chap. 4, *n.* 63; Salmerón, tom. ix. in Evang., tract. 41.

for daily Communion. Many were satisfied with an annual, a monthly, or at most a weekly Communion. Some went so far as to declare that business men and married persons could not be admitted to frequent Communion.

8. Others went to the opposite extreme, and declared daily Communion to be a divine command. Consequently, for no single day was it lawful to omit Communion, not even on Good Friday, on which day they actually administered it.

9. The Holy See on its part, rejecting these extreme views, condemned abuses and errors. This is seen both in the decree "Cum ad aures" of the S. C. of the Council, issued February 12, 1679, and confirmed by Innocent XI., and in the decree "Sanctissimus," in which Alexander VIII. condemned (December 7, 1690) the proposition of Baius, which maintained that a necessary disposition for Communion was a perfect love of God without the intermixture of any imperfection.

10. The poison of Jansenism, which under pretext of honouring the Blessed Sacrament had infected even good men, was not extirpated by these decrees, and the controversy as to the dispositions required for frequent Communion still continued. Even theologians of good repute were of opinion that only in rare cases

and with many precautions could daily Communion be allowed.

11. Still there were not wanting men of learning and of piety who, relying on the teaching of the Fathers, maintained that there was no precept requiring more perfect dispositions for daily Communion than were required for monthly or weekly Communion; while on the other hand the good resulting from daily Communion is far greater than in the case of monthly or weekly Communion.

12. As even in our own time the continuance of these disputes caused disquiet in the minds of the faithful, many persons of influence and pastors of souls petitioned His Holiness to settle the controversy as to the necessary dispositions for daily Communion, so that this practice so agreeable to God might spread more and more for the good of souls and of our holy religion.

13. Accordingly the Pope himself, as desirous as any for the spread of the practice of frequent and daily Communion among the faithful, entrusted the business to the S. C. of the Council, which after mature deliberation formulated its decisions. These the Pope confirmed, and ordered their publication, and they form the disciplinary part of the decree.

III

DISCIPLINARY PART OF THE DECREE

14. This part consists of nine articles. The first states that daily Communion, so desired by Christ and the Church, is open to every class of people. No one may be denied it who is in a state of grace, and has a right intention in desiring it.

The second article explains that this right intention consists in a desire to please God, to unite one's self more closely to Him, and to seek in Communion a remedy against one's own weakness and imperfection.

The third article is to the effect that, though it is much to be desired that those who communicate frequently or daily be free from all venial sin, at any rate from deliberate sin, and from all affection for it, it is however sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, if they have the firm purpose of never again committing it. Daily Communion accompanied by a purpose of this nature will raise such souls little by little to high perfection.

The fourth article recommends that Communion should be preceded by careful preparation, and followed by thanksgiving, as each one's strength, condition, and duties allow.

The fruit derived is proportionate to the disposition of the communicant.

The faithful are bidden in the fifth article to conform themselves to the directions of their confessors, so that they may proceed with greater prudence and reap more abundant fruit. Confessors, however, are directed not to keep from daily Communion anyone who is in a state of grace, and approaches the Holy Table with a right intention.

In the sixth article, parish priests, confessors, and preachers are ordered to exhort the faithful often and earnestly, to communicate frequently and even daily in accordance with the directions of the Roman Catechism.[1]

The seventh article directs that the practice of frequent or daily Communion be urged especially in religious houses (the prescriptions of the decree "Quem ad modum" being observed), and also in seminaries, and even in schools and colleges for the training of youth.

In the eighth article it is declared that the rules and constitutions of the religious orders and institutes that prescribe fixed days for Communion are in future to be considered merely as directive, the days so determined being taken as the minimum. Such regulations are no obstacle to frequent or daily Communion, as the tenor of the former articles clearly shows.

To secure that this decree come to the knowledge of every religious of either sex, local superiors must see that it is translated into the

[1] Part 2, *De Euch.*, chap. 63 ; *cf. n.* 82.

vernacular, and read every year in every house within the octave of Corpus Christi.

The ninth article contains a command for all writers on religious subjects to abstain in future from the date of the promulgation of this decree from controversy as to the necessary dispositions for daily Communion.

15. We insert here the translation of this decree, which will mark a date ever memorable in the history of ecclesiastical discipline.

IV

DECREE ON RECEIVING DAILY THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST[1]

The Council of Trent, having in view the unspeakable treasures of grace which are offered to the faithful who receive the Most Holy Eucharist, makes the following declaration: "The holy Synod would desire that at every Mass the faithful who are present should communicate not only spiritually, by way of internal affection, but sacramentally by the actual reception of the Eucharist" (Sess. 22, cap. 6). Which words declare plainly enough the wish of the Church, that all Christians should be daily nourished by this heavenly banquet, and

[1] The translation of this decree is reproduced by kind permission of the editor of the *Tablet*.

should derive therefrom abundant fruit for their sanctification.

16. And this wish of the Council is in entire agreement with that desire wherewith Christ Our Lord was inflamed when He instituted this divine Sacrament. For He Himself more than once, and in no ambiguous terms, pointed out the necessity of eating His flesh, and drinking His blood, especially in these words: "This is the bread that cometh down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (John vi. 59). Now, from this comparison of the food of angels with bread and with the manna, it was easily to be understood by His disciples that, as the body is daily nourished with bread, and as the Hebrews were daily nourished with manna in the desert, so the Christian soul might daily partake of this heavenly bread and be refreshed thereby. Moreover, whereas, in the Lord's Prayer, we are bidden to ask for "our daily bread," the holy Fathers of the Church all but unanimously teach that by these words must be understood, not so much that material bread which is the support of the body, as the Eucharistic bread which ought to be our daily food.

17. Moreover, the desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church that all the faithful should daily approach the sacred banquet is directed chiefly to this end, that the faithful, being united to

God by means of the Sacrament, may thence derive strength to resist their sensual passions, to cleanse themselves from the stains of daily faults, and to avoid those graver sins to which human frailty is liable; so that its primary purpose is not that the honour and reverence due to Our Lord may be safeguarded, or that the Sacrament may serve as a reward of virtue bestowed on the recipients (St Augustine, serm. 57 in Matth., de Orat. Dom. v. 7). Hence the holy Council of Trent calls the Eucharist, "the antidote whereby we are delivered from daily faults and preserved from deadly sins" (Sess. 13, cap. ii.).

18. This desire on the part of God was so well understood by the first Christians, that they daily flocked to the holy table as to a source of life and strength. "They were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread" (Acts ii. 42). And that this practice was continued into later ages, not without great fruit of holiness and perfection, the holy Fathers and ecclesiastical writers bear witness.

19. But when in later times piety grew cold, and more especially under the influence of the plague of Jansenism, disputes began to arise concerning the dispositions with which it was proper to receive Communion frequently or daily, and writers vied with one another in imposing more and more stringent conditions

as necessary to be fulfilled. The result of such disputes was, that very few were considered worthy to communicate daily, and to derive from this most healing sacrament its more abundant fruits; the rest being content to partake of it once a year, or once a month, or at the utmost weekly. Nay, to such a pitch was rigorism carried, that whole classes of persons were excluded from a frequent approach to the holy table; for instance, those engaged in trade, or even *those living in the state of matrimony.*

20. Others, however, went to the opposite extreme. Under the persuasion that daily Communion was a divine precept, and in order that no day might pass without the reception of the Sacrament, besides other practices contrary to the approved usage of the Church, they held that the Holy Eucharist ought to be received, and in fact administered it, even on Good Friday.

21. Under these circumstances the Holy See did not fail in its duty of vigilance. For by a decree of this Sacred Congregation which begins with the words, "*Cum ad aures,*" issued on February 12, 1679, with the approbation of Innocent XI., it condemned these errors, and put a stop to such abuses; at the same time declaring that all the faithful of whatsoever class, merchants or tradesmen or married persons not excepted, might be admitted to frequent Communion,

according to the devotion of each one, and the judgment of his confessor. And on December 7, 1690, by the decree of Pope Alexander VIII., "Sanctissimus Dominus," the proposition of Baius postulating a perfectly pure love of God, without any admixture of defect, as requisite on the part of those who wished to approach the holy table, was condemned.

22. Yet the poison of Jansenism, which, under the pretext of showing due honour and reverence to the Holy Eucharist, had infected the minds even of good men, did not entirely disappear. The controversy as to the dispositions requisite for the lawful and laudable frequentation of the Sacrament survived the declarations of the Holy See, so much so indeed, that certain theologians of good repute judged that daily Communion should be allowed to the faithful only in rare cases, and under many conditions.

23. On the other hand, there were not wanting men of learning and piety who more readily granted permission for this practice, so salutary and so pleasing to God. In accordance with the teaching of the Fathers, they maintained that there was no precept of the Church which prescribed more perfect dispositions in the case of daily than of weekly or monthly Communion; while the good effects of daily Communion would, they alleged, be far more abundant than those of Communion received weekly or monthly.

24. In our own day the controversy has been carried on with increased warmth, and not without bitterness, so that the minds of confessors and the consciences of the faithful have been disturbed, to the no small detriment of Christian piety and devotion. Accordingly, certain distinguished men, themselves pastors of souls, have urgently besought His Holiness Pope Pius X. to deign to settle, by his supreme authority, the question concerning the dispositions requisite for daily Communion; so that this usage, so salutary and so pleasing to God, might not only suffer no decrease among the faithful, but might rather be promoted and everywhere propagated; a thing most desirable in these days, when religion and the Catholic faith are attacked on all sides, and the true love of God and genuine piety are so lacking in many quarters. And His Holiness, being most earnestly desirous, out of his abundant solicitude and zeal, that the faithful should be invited to partake of the sacred banquet as often as possible, and even daily, and should profit to the utmost by its fruits, committed the aforesaid question to this Sacred Congregation, to be looked into and decided once for all (*definiendum*).

25. Accordingly, the Sacred Congregation of the Council, in a plenary session held on December 16, 1905, submitted the whole matter to a very careful scrutiny; and after sedulously

examining the reasons adduced on either side, determined and declared as follows :—

1. Frequent and daily Communion, as a thing most earnestly desired by Christ Our Lord and by the Catholic Church should be open to all the faithful, of whatever rank and condition of life; so that no one who is in a state of grace, and who approaches the holy table with a right and devout intention, can lawfully be hindered therefrom.
2. A right intention consists in this: that he who approaches the holy table should do so, not out of routine or vainglory or human respect, but for the purpose of pleasing God, of being more closely united with Him by charity, and of seeking this divine remedy for his weaknesses and defects.
3. Although it is most expedient that those who communicate frequently or daily should be free from venial sins, especially from such as are fully deliberate, and from any affection thereto; nevertheless it is sufficient that they be free from mortal sin, with the purpose of never sinning mortally in future; and if they have this sincere purpose, it is impossible but that daily communicants should gradually emancipate themselves from even venial sins, and from all affection thereto.

4. But whereas the Sacraments of the New Law, though they take effect *ex opere operato*, nevertheless produce a greater effect in proportion as the dispositions of the recipient are better: therefore, care is to be taken that Holy Communion be preceded by serious preparation, and followed by a suitable thanksgiving according to each one's strength, circumstances, and duties.

5. That the practice of frequent and daily Communion may be carried out with greater prudence and more abundant merit, the confessor's advice should be asked. Confessors, however, are to be careful not to dissuade anyone (*ne quemquam avertant*) from frequent and daily Communion, provided that he is in a state of grace, and approaches with a right intention.

6. But since it is plain that, by the frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist, union with Christ is fostered, the spiritual life more abundantly sustained, the soul more richly endowed with virtues, and an even surer pledge of everlasting happiness bestowed on the recipient; therefore parish priests, confesssors, and preachers —in accordance with the approved teaching of the Roman Catechism (Part ii., cap. 4, *n.* 63)—are frequently, and with

great zeal, to exhort the faithful to this devout and salutary practice.

7. Frequent and daily Communion is to be promoted especially in religious orders and congregations of all kinds; with regard to which, however, the decree "Quemadmodum," issued on December 17, 1890, by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars is to remain in force. It is also to be promoted especially in ecclesiastical seminaries, where students are preparing for the service of the altar; as also in all Christian establishments, of whatever kind, for the training of youth.

8. In the case of religious institutes, whether of solemn or religious vows, in whose rules, or constitutions, or calendars, Communion is assigned to certain fixed days, such regulations are to be regarded as *directive* and not *preceptive*. In such cases the appointed number of Communions should be regarded as a minimum, and not as setting a limit to the devotion of the religious. Therefore, freedom of access to the Eucharistic table, whether more frequently or daily, must always be allowed them, according to the principles above laid down in this decree. And in order that all religious of both sexes may clearly understand the provisions of this decree, the superior of each house is to

see that it is read in community, in the vernacular, every year, within the octave of the Feast of Corpus Christi.

9. Finally, after the publication of this decree, all ecclesiastical writers are to cease from contentious controversies concerning the dispositions requisite for frequent and daily Communion.

All this having been reported to His Holiness Pope Pius X. by the undersigned secretary of the Sacred Congregation, in an audience held on December 17, 1905, His Holiness ratified and confirmed the present decree, and ordered it to be published, anything to the contrary notwithstanding. He further ordered that it should be sent to all local ordinaries and regular prelates, to be communicated by them to their respective seminaries, parishes, religious institutes, and priests; and that in their reports concerning the state of their respective dioceses or institutes, they should inform the Holy See concerning the execution of the matters therein determined.

Given at Rome, the 20th day of December, 1905.

✠ VINCENT,
Card. Bishop of Palestrina, Prefect.
CAJETAN DE LAI,
Secretary.

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COMMENTARY

I

THE DOGMATIC PREMISSES: THE CONTROVERSY

26. All Catholic writers are in agreement with respect to the dogmatic basis for the practice of daily Communion. They all recognise it as most pleasing to God and greatly desired and recommended by the Church. Among many others they adduce in support of this opinion the texts cited in the Pope's decree.

27. The controversy among theologians turns rather upon the dispositions and conditions required for this frequent reception. God and the Church they all say desire frequent or even daily Communion; on this point we are in agreement. But without doubt they presume that the faithful must be in the proper dispositions, and on this point also they concur. But in what do these dispositions consist? It is at any rate clear that to communicate without grave sin it is sufficient to be in a state of grace,

although one shall have made no further advance in virtue and retain an affection for venial sin. In the case under consideration, however, it is not a question of avoiding mortal sin, but of practising a council of perfection, and one most pleasing to God.

Is the mere state of grace sufficient for this? or is a higher degree of virtue called for? If so, what degree?

28. This question has long been debated. On the authority of Benedict XIV.,[1] we learn that as far back as the twelfth century grave doubts arose in the minds of pious and learned men as to the advisability of allowing daily Communion to the faithful. Both Innocent III. in his work *De sacro altaris Mysteriis*,[2] and before his date, Gratian in his *Decretum*[3] treated the question, but without arriving at a definite conclusion.

29. To go still further back we may say with Petavius[4] that the controversy dates from the fourth century of the Church's history, being touched on by St Augustine.[5]

[1] *De Synodo*, lib. 7, cap. 12, *n.* 6.

[2] lib. 4, cap. 42; *Migne*, P. L., v. 217, col. 883.

[3] lib. 3, dist. 2, cap. 13.

[4] *De Pœnitentia et Communione*, lib. 3, c. 3, *n.* 1.

[5] These are the Holy Doctor's words. "Suppose one to declare that the Eucharist should not be received daily, and you were to ask the reason. Because, he would answer, to approach daily so great a sacrament, those days should be chosen which are marked by a greater purity and self-restraint, for 'he that eateth unworthily, eateth and drinketh

See also the letters of St Jerome,[1] and Gennadius *De Ecclesiasticis Dogmatibus*.[2]

30. St Thomas,[3] Durandus,[4] and St Bonaventure,[5] with the majority of the theologians of the Middle Ages, treat the same question.

31. The discussion broke out again in the sixteenth century. It is well known that St Francis Borgia, while viceroy of Catalonia, was in the habit of communicating every Sunday and feast day. This practice, so unusual at that time, brought on him no little blame in private conversation, and even in sermons and books, for it seemed to many an irreverence for a man,

judgment to himself' (1 Cor. xi. 29). Against him another would maintain . . . that if a man's sins be not so great that he be judged worthy of excommunication, he should not cut himself off from the daily strengthening of the Lord's body. Perchance this strife between them may be appeased should one bid them be at peace in the name of Christ, and let each one do what his piety persuades him to. For neither of them dishonours the body and blood of the Lord, but contends in a rivalry of honour to this life-giving Sacrament. For Zaccheus and the Centurion of the Gospel-story were not at variance, nor did one prefer himself to the other when the one received the Lord with joy into his house (Luke xix. 6), while the other exclaimed, 'I am not worthy thou shouldst enter under my roof' (Matt. viii. 8), for both honoured the Saviour in different and well-nigh contrary ways; both were burdened with sin, both obtained mercy" (*Migne*, P. L., v. 33, col. 201).

[1] *Migne*, P. L., vol. 22, col. 505, 672.

[2] *Migne*, P. L., vol. 42, col. 1217.

[3] *Sum. Th.*, p. 3, q. 80, art. 10; 4 dist. 12, q. 4, ad. 3.

[4] 4 dist. 12, art. 2, q. 2.

[5] 4 dist., q. 6.

even of such acknowledged piety, who was married, and concerned so much in politics, to receive the Blessed Sacrament so often. To confirm him in so laudable a practice, a letter from St Ignatius of Loyola was necessary, urging him to continue his pious custom.[1]

32. The controversy far from dying out broke forth again in the seventeenth century, and has continued with greater or less vehemence, as we shall see, to the present day.

33. Two main opinions stand out in this long-continued controversy, that held by those who for frequent or daily Communion require further dispositions than a state of grace and a right intention, and the opinion which declares these two conditions to be sufficient.

34. The Jansenists, by attaching undue importance to the reasons adduced to support the former opinion, ended by rendering difficult or almost impossible, not merely frequent Communion, but even annual Communion. Others exaggerating the force of the arguments for the latter opinion went so far as to declare daily Communion to be a divine precept even on Good Friday, and taught that the faithful in this matter ought not to be guided by the direction of their confessor, but should communicate every day, even in opposition to his opinion. They

[1] Astrain, *Hist. de la Comp. de Jesús*, v. i., p. 283.

were guilty too of various other abuses, as we shall see later.

35. This diversity of judgments was due in great part to a failure to draw a proper distinction between three kinds of dispositions for Holy Communion. In the first place comes such a disposition as should make us fully worthy of so infinite a favour. This disposition called *condigna* by theologians is impossible for man, and is referred to by à Kempis in these words: "Should you possess angelical purity and the holiness of St John the Baptist, you would not be worthy to receive or to handle this sacrament."

The saints have often dwelt on this thought to foster in men humility in the reception of this sacrament.

36. The second kind of disposition is such as is most becoming and most praiseworthy, though not a necessary disposition for the reception of the sacrament.

Saints and ascetical writers are never weary of exhorting us to attain to this state.[1]

37. The third kind of disposition is that which is necessary and at the same time sufficient whether for annual or for daily Communion.

[1] See article 3 of the decree, *n.* 14, 25.

II

THE FIRST OPINION

38. We are bound to admit that, in support of the view maintaining the necessity of further dispositions for frequent Communion[1] than a right intention and absence of mortal sin, may be cited doctors of the highest repute, eminent saints, and the most brilliant theologians. It would be an impossible task to mention them all, and still more so to quote their words. We must content ourselves with bringing forward a few passages, drawing up as we go along a short list of authorities.

(*a*) *Men Remarkable for Sanctity and Learning*

39. St Thomas in his *Summa Theologica*[2] puts the question, whether it is lawful to communicate every day, *Utrum, licet quotidie hoc sacramentum suscipere?* and in the body of the article he says: "I reply that the use of this

[1] As applied to Holy Communion, the word *frequent* has not always been taken in the same sense. Albertus Magnus (4 sent. dist. 13, art. 27) speaks of monthly Communion as frequent, and St Antoninus does the same (*Sum. Th.*, p. 3, tit. 14, c. 12). In our own day, the term *frequent* is applied only to the reception of Holy Communion several times a week. Gury-Ferreres, v. 2, *n.* 338.

[2] *Ibid.*, 3 p., q. 80, art. 10.

sacrament may be considered in two ways, first as it is a sacrament salutary to man, and hence it is useful to receive it daily, that man may thus derive benefit from it day by day. . . . On the other hand, it may be considered in relation to the receiver, in whom great devotion and reverence is looked for when approaching this sacrament. Consequently, should anyone find himself daily duly prepared, it is right for him to receive it daily. . . . But because oftentimes there arise in a number of cases many obstacles to this devotion through indisposition of body or of soul, it is not beneficial for all to approach this sacrament daily; but only so often as one finds himself prepared."

Here St Thomas seems to suppose as a necessary preparation for daily Communion its reception with great devotion and reverence, *cum magna devotione et reverentia*, which seems to imply something more than a right intention and a state of grace.

40. The opinion of St Bonaventure would seem to be similar when he says[1] that the necessary dispositions for frequent Communion are found in very few:—"All the arguments given in the first part for frequent Communion are to be understood with the proviso that the due dispositions be present, a condition fulfilled generally speaking, in very few cases."

[1] In 4 sent. dist. 12, art. 2, q. 2. See also, lib. 2, *De profectu religiosorum*, c. 79, Vives edition, v. 12, p. 44.

41. It is to St Ignatius and the Society of Jesus that is due in great measure the greater frequenting of the sacraments which dates from the middle of the sixteenth century. But St Ignatius himself, who so much recommended Holy Communion, laid it down, that as a general rule seculars, especially married people, should not be advised to receive Holy Communion more frequently than every eighth day. See the 26th rule for priests,[1] which although not from the hand of St Ignatius himself but of his immediate successor Laínez, undoubtedly reflects the spirit of the holy founder of the society.[2]

Even when speaking of the lay brothers of the Society of Jesus, Father Polanco wrote in the name of St Ignatius to Father Juan B. de Barma, rector of the college of Gandía, August 3, 1553:—"With regard to the lay brothers communicating oftener than on Sundays and

[1] "Though it is a devout practice to exhort the faithful to frequent Communion, yet they should warn those whom they perceive inclined to it not to communicate oftener than once a week, especially if they be married persons." From the date when this rule was written up to our own times its interpretation has continually broadened; and the rule has been altered in the last general congregation.

[2] In connection with frequent Communion, two letters of St Ignatius are worthy of notice: one addressed in 1540 (August or September) to his fellow townsmen of Azpeitia, and another written to Teresa Rejadella of Barcelona, Nov. 15, 1543. (See *Monumenta Historica, S.J., S. Ignatii Epistolæ*, vol. 1, p. 182, 274.) Polanco Chronicon, S.J., v. 4, *n.* 171, p. 94 (Matriti, 1896). *Cf.* however what is said below, *n.* 62, *n.* 99.

holy days, Father Nadal has expressed our Father's opinion in the Constitutions. Speaking generally, it is there laid down that unless a holy day comes, once a week is sufficient for scholastics. However, in a particular case superiors may be more liberal, as may seem good to them. But when leave is granted to communicate oftener, more regard should be had to the needs than to the devotion of the petitioner. I mean his spiritual needs. In the same way with regard to penances, more is allowed to some than to others."[1]

42. Thus we need not be astonished at what de Lugo wrote in his time on this matter :—"I omit all mention of the writers of our society which, though from its birth it showed itself much inclined to frequent reception of this sacrament, still always wished daily Communion to be granted with the greatest caution, and only to souls of assured piety and more than ordinary sanctity."[2]

43. Blessed John of Avila also worked earnestly in the cause of frequent Communion. But he too seems to require greater preparation than the mere absence of mortal sin joined to a right intention, and like St Ignatius he is little inclined to grant Communion more frequently than once a week, and only in very rare cases a daily Communion.

[1] *Monumenta Ignatiana, Epistolæ*, v. 5, p. 274.
[2] *De Euchar.*, disp. 17, sec. 2, *n.* 15.

44. He writes in a letter to a preacher on frequent Communion:[1]

"Coming now to the fact that your reverence relates that a great number of married persons in that city communicate every day, I must say that the fact that those who do so are *many in number* makes me think that God cannot be pleased with it. For this practice of daily Communion demands *very careful preparation*, so much so that the theologians, as your reverence knows, especially St Thomas and St Bonaventure speak of it rather as a possibility than as an actual reality. This difficulty of preparation increases in the married state, both on account of the continual business that distracts the mind, as well as on account of the duties peculiar to that state which do much to obscure it."[2]

45. "I cannot think that in the case of many such sanctity is to be found that in face of such difficulties they can make such preparation as God desires in those who receive Him daily. I believe that these persons not only do not know how to communicate, but not even how to pray.[3]

"Your reverence would do well to exhort them to fulfil the obligations of their state, and devote what time is over to their devotions; and they will do no slight thing, if they receive their Lord well every eighth day.

[1] Edition of 1901, Madrid, v. 1, p. 209.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 212. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 212.

"Yet, while not all should communicate even every week, some, on the other hand, should communicate oftener, for, as I have said, there is no one rule for all.[1]

46. "You know, too, that St Francis of Assisi did not communicate every day, nor St Francis de Paula, even when advanced in age, but only every eighth day. This makes me think that for persons of less holiness it is advisable to communicate every eighth day, and even oftener, for I believe that the need, which the wickedness of the times, the attacks of the devil and our own weakness cause nowadays, calls for more frequent recourse to this remedy and to the table which God has prepared for us here below as an antidote for every evil."[2]

47. The venerable Father de Ponte in his treatise on Christian Perfection,[3] after citing the words of St Bonaventure,[4] adds :—

"There is scarcely anyone so pious and holy, with the exception of priests, for whom it would not be enough to communicate, as a general rule, once a week; unless some special reason occasionally, though rarely, suggest some other course."

He lays down amongst others the following rules :—

1. "Persons *zealous* in the service of God,

[1] Edition of 1901, Madrid, vol. 1, p. 213. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 214, 215.
[3] Treatise iv., cap. 6, § 4.
[4] *De profectu religioso*, cap. 79.

especially if they have embraced the state of celibacy, may and ought to communicate once a week as a general rule.

2. "Certain persons may have reached a state of *such high virtue and sanctity*, and have *such a hunger for this divine sacrament*, that Communion three or four times a week ought to be allowed them. There are some, too, though *very few* to whom *daily* Communion may be granted, they being persons *entirely devoted to the service of God and freed from the duties of married life and from secular occupations.*"

48. Still more precise are the following words of St Francis of Sales :—

"To communicate every eight days, it is *necessary* to be free from mortal sin *and all affection to venial sin*, and to have *a great desire* for communion : but to Communicate *every day* one *must besides* have overcome most of one's bad inclinations, and act only on the advice of one's spiritual director."[1]

We shall speak later of St Alphonsus de Liguori.

(*b*) *The Great Theologians*

49. Few authors have brought forward authorities and arguments more powerful and compelling than Suarez in favour of frequent

[1] *Introduction to a Devout Life*, p. 2, chap. 20 ; *Œuvres*, vol. 3, pp. 119, 122, Annecy, 1893.

Communion.[1] Nevertheless, he comes to this conclusion:—"But *rarely* should anyone be advised to communicate, as a general rule, oftener than once a week."

50. To support this conclusion he adds:—"Such is the mind of the authorities quoted, and also of men of prudence with experience in this matter, and the practice of the Church lends it no little support. The foundation of this opinion is that thus is secured the good of souls, while at the same time proper care is had of the reverence due to this sacrament. For, speaking generally, the cares of life are so many, and there are so many distractions to dissipate the mind and take up one's time, that it is not possible for a man to approach more frequently *with proper dispositions*, nor can he give the time that such a preparation demands. To fulfil these conditions once in a week is not ordinarily difficult. Hence it will often happen that a single Communion received at a fitting season will result in greater fruit than several without due preparation and thanksgiving."[2]

51. Cardinal de Lugo, called by St Alphonsus Liguori, "easily the first of moral theologians after St Thomas," was a vigorous defender of this opinion, principally against Marzilla, of whom we shall speak later.[3] His doctrine is

[1] *De Euch.*, disp. 69, sect. 4, *n.* 6 *sqq.*

[2] *Ibid.*, *n.* 7, ed. Vives, vol. 21, p. 542; *cf. n.* 37.

[3] *De Euch.*, disp. 17.

summed up in the two following statements :—
"The true and traditional opinion which all the faithful have drunk in with their mother's milk, and which the schoolmen have accepted almost as a first principle without need of proof, is twofold :—First, that *daily Communion* is not suited for all *pious souls* of every state of life without distinction, *nor* is it *for their greater good*, though at times *not unlawful*."

52. "Secondly, he who does not wish to err in a matter of so great importance, should not be guided by his own judgment; but should stand by the judgment of a prudent confessor or spiritual director, whose office it will be to extend or restrict the frequency of Communion, in view of the greater or less fitness of the penitent."

In this disputation of de Lugo we can find the best summary made up to this time of the authorities and arguments brought forward on either side.

53. The theologians of Salamanca[1] explain and adopt as their own this opinion, giving a short list of the authors who defend it. These are their words :—

"Though many of the Fathers of the Church mentioned by Salmerón[2] often urge frequent Communion, yet they never intended it to be so understood as if it were desirable for all who are

[1] Salmant., vol. 1, tr. 4, c. 8, punct. iii. *n.* 40.

[2] tom. 5, tr. 50, et tom. 9, tr. 41, in Joannem.

in the state of grace to approach this sacrament daily, but only when there is added to this condition great devotion and careful preparation for daily Communion.

54. "For this reason the Roman Catechism, when it recalls the ancient practice of frequent Communion, adds, as the reason for its existence, *the pre-eminent piety* of that happy age.[1] For all, it says, who at that time professed the Christian faith were so on fire with a real and ardent love of God, that they were continually engaged in prayer and other pious works, and were thus prepared to receive daily the Sacrament of the Lord's Body. This preparation, therefore, consisted not *in the mere freedom from mortal sin*, but in an *ardent love of God, unwearying prayer*, and the practice of other works of piety. And as these dispositions are realised *in very few cases*, while even in pious souls daily Communion not unfrequently begets coldness and a weakening of reverence and devotion, it follows as a consequence that neither the reverence due to so august a sacrament, nor the true interest of the communicant allow such frequent Communion to a soul that is wanting in zeal and piety, and is absorbed in worldly pursuits.

55. "With due regard then to the conditions under which men live, there are *very few* (priests excepted) who should be advised to communicate

[1] *Ibid.*, Part 2, chap. iv., sect. 61.

daily; *few*, too, who should be urged to more than a weekly Communion.

"Who are to be thus privileged is not to be decided by the individual himself, but left to the judgment of a prudent confessor or spiritual director."

In support of this opinion may be quoted, Alexander of Hales, Richardus, Paludanus, Denis the Carthusian, Albert the Great, Victoria, Peter Soto, Durandus, Dominic Soto, Ovandus, Cajetan, St Antoninus, Argentina, Tapia, Nunnus, Themens, Sylvester, Tibungius, Tabiena, Peter de Ledesma, Bartholomew Ledesma, Medina, Angelus, John of Avila, Suarez, Henríquez, Coninck, Valentia, all of whom Cardinal de Lugo quotes with approval.[1] So also Vasquez, Laymann, Bonacina, Fagúndez, etc.[2]

56. To this scanty list may be added Cárdenas,[3] Rhodes,[4] Lacroix,[5] Mazzota,[6] etc., etc.

57. The learned and erudite Cardinal Lambertini (afterwards Benedict XIV.) in his monumental work *De synodo dioecesana*[7] writes in express terms:—

"Confessors must take care not to advise or allow frequent approach to the Holy Table to

[1] *De Euch.*, disp. 17, sect. 7.
[2] p. 97, Venetiis, 1734.
[3] *Crisis theologica*, disp. 66.
[4] *De Euch.*, disp. 1, q. 4, sect. 1, § 3.
[5] l. 6, *n.* 652.
[6] Tr. 5, disp. 4, q. 1, § 1.
[7] l. 7, c. 12, *n.* 9.

those . . . who, while they avoid grave sin, still retain affection to venial sin."[1] (*Cf.* No. 118.)

58. St Alphonsus Liguori holds the same opinion, as may be judged by the following extracts from his *Homo Apostolicus*.[2]

"In this matter some err through excessive laxity, others through too great rigour. It is wrong without doubt, as O. H. F. Benedict XIV. notes in his golden work on the Synod, to allow frequent Communion to such as fall often into mortal sin, OR to *such as approach Holy Communion with affection to deliberate venial sin* with no desire of amendment. It is indeed proper at times to grant Communion to some who are in danger of falling into mortal sin that they may gain strength to resist; but in regard to those who are not in such danger, and who are in the habit of committing deliberate venial sin, and show no sign of improvement or desire of amendment, it is best not to allow them Communion oftener than once a week. It will, moreover, be good to deprive them of Communion sometimes for a whole week, so that they may gain a greater horror for their faults and greater reverence towards this sacrament."[3]

59. "To certain souls who desire it for their greater growth in the love of God, I judge the director can hardly without scruple deny Com-

[1] *Venetiis*, 1788, v. 11, p. 141.

[2] Appendix I., *n.* 29.

[3] *Ibid.*, *n.* 29, v. 3, p. 65, Bassani, 1833.

munion frequently and even daily—with the exception of one day in the week in accordance with the practice of some directors of experience, and with the exception also of the periods for which they may decide to deprive their penitents of Communion, as a proof of their obedience or humility, or for any other good reason. Such souls, however, should live *free from affection to any venial sin, and should moreover be much given to mental prayer and strive towards perfection, no longer falling into sin, even fully deliberate venial sin.*"[1]

60. "If, however, it be afterwards noticed that, notwithstanding frequent Communion, a person makes no progress in the path of perfection, and does not free himself from deliberate faults, even though venial, but for example still *clings to the pleasures of sense in sight, hearing, and taste, and is fastidious in dress,* in this case it would be well to restrict the use of Communion deliberately, to the end that such a person may take serious thought of amendment, and look to his progress in spirit."[2]

The same opinion couched in identical language will be found in the *Praxis Confessorum* of the same saint.[3]

[1] Appendix I., *n.* 152, p. 66. [2] *Ibid.*, *n.* 155.
[3] *nn.* 149, 152, 155, Tornaci, 1876, p. 452 *sqq.*

III

THE SECOND OPINION

61. This opinion has found its chief champions in Spain, so much so that Diana[1] declares that it was taught only *by a few Spanish writers.*

(*a*) *The Jesuits Salmerón and Cristóbal de Madrid*

62. Perhaps the first to teach this doctrine were Salmerón (✠ 1585) and Cristóbal de Madrid.

Father Salmerón was a native of Toledo, and a companion of St Ignatius in the foundation of the Society. In the forty-first treatise of his work, *Commentarium in Evangelicam historiam*,[2] he maintains the general proposition that, taking for granted that a person makes a fitting preparation, it is more praiseworthy and profitable to communicate often than rarely. He establishes his proposition elegantly by citations from Holy Scripture, with arguments and by the authority of the Fathers, and he demolishes victoriously in the following treatise the objections of adversaries.

63. Coming next to treat of the preparation

[1] *Resol. mor.*, part. 11, tract. 7, resol. 15, *Venetiis*, 1655.

[2] p. 434 *sqq.*

required, he draws a very opportune distinction between three kinds of preparation for Communion.

64. The first is a preparation fully adequate to the dignity of the sacrament (*condigna*), and this is to be found in Christ alone.

The second consists in a state of high perfection and is very admirable, but not an indispensable condition for frequent Communion; it is ordinarily rather the fruit of frequent Communion than a preparation for it.

The third, necessary and at the same time sufficient for Communion, even for frequent Communion, consists in freedom from mortal sin and in a right intention.

65. "We say in reply that a *fit state* to receive Communion may be understood in three ways. First, as it results from the nature and worth of the recipient himself. Judged by this standard no creature, even the most exalted, not even the most holy Virgin herself, has proved worthy of this sacrament: and for the simple reason that no proportion can exist between the finite and the infinite. A *fit state* may secondly be understood as the generous practice of virtue joined to the possession of spiritual gifts, notably devotion and reverence. In this sense he may be considered worthy who is conspicuous for his good life and approaches the Holy Table with great reverence and ardent love. However, this height of perfection is not an indispensable con-

dition for the worthy reception of this sacrament: indeed, it is often granted only on the actual reception of Communion: and if it were an indispensable condition there would be few indeed who would dare to communicate even once a year, much less daily, as was the practice of the early Church.

66. "In a third sense a *fit state* may be understood as such a disposition of soul as excludes all offence of the Divine Majesty. This presupposes examination of conscience and confession. It supposes too faith, a desire of pleasing God, and a renewal of spirit: he who fulfils these conditions communicates worthily. The apostle requires no more than that 'each one should prove himself, and so eat of this bread and drink of this chalice' (1 Cor. xi. 28).

67. "Our conclusion from the above is that neither venial sin, nor dissipation of mind (provided it is not excessive), nor slackness in the practice of virtue, nor the cooling of devotion, meaning by this a loss of sensible fervour, make a man unworthy to approach the Holy Table. For generally all such defects are made up for in the reception of Communion, since it has been instituted for the very purpose of their removal.

68. "It is good, therefore, to communicate *frequently* rather than rarely, despite the outcry raised by some writers, who by fears and scruples drive men from the tree of life."[1]

[1] tom. ix. in *Evang.*, tr. 42, Matriti, 1601, p. 448.

It will be noticed that Father Salmerón in laying down the necessary dispositions is in complete agreement with the prescriptions of Pius X.'s decree.[1]

See also Petavius[2] and Nos. 35-37. Marzilla merely copied the arguments of Salmerón as de Lugo points out.[3]

69. According to some, Salmerón restricts his statements somewhat in the following passage :—

"As regards laymen, for some daily Communion is suitable, for others weekly, for others again monthly, and so on according to each one's disposition and the judgment of a prudent and pious director, so that no fixed rule can be given."[4]

To this we may answer that these words imply no further restrictions than well-regulated prudence requires, for here too in pointing out the qualities looked for in a confessor in this matter he agrees with what Piux X. has laid down in the fifth article of the decree, for Father Salmerón writes :—

"Let him, however, who holds the office of spiritual father, understand that he should keep no one from Communion except by reason of sin or scandal, or for some other cause, which may be for his advantage and greater good."[5]

The rest of what Salmerón writes is in full accord with the words of the Roman Cate-

[1] Art. 1.
[2] l. 3, c. 13, cf. *n.* 106.
[3] *De Euch.*, disp. 17, sect. 4, *n.* 36.
[4] Tr. 41, p. 442.
[5] *Ibid.*

chism :[1]—"No fixed rule for all can be set down as to the advisability of monthly, weekly, or daily Communion."

70. Father Salmerón's work was not published till between the years 1598 and 1602,[2] a good many years after the death of its author ; but as early as June 24, 1554, Father Polanco wrote to Father Salmerón, by order of St Ignatius, and instructed him to write a short treatise on frequent confession and Communion to answer those who opposed their frequent use.

"We should like very much to make use of your reverence in a business of no great length to close the mouths of many in various regions who are hindering the service of God. I refer to the frequentation of the sacraments of confession and Communion. The fact is that in certain places persons who have a reputation for piety are opposed to this frequent reception, so that, if your reverence can spare a little time, we should be glad if you would arrange the matter as shall seem best to you, bearing in mind that your work will do good in many places."[3]

Salmerón immediately sent to Rome a short treatise which seemingly reviewed the chief testimonies of the Fathers of the Church in favour of frequent Communion. This is evident from what Polanco wrote :[4]—

[1] Part 2, c. 4, *n.* 63.

[2] Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque etc.*, vol. 7, col. 478.

[3] *Monumenta historica, S.J., Polanco Hist., S.J.*, vol. 4, p. 182, *n.* 3, Matriti, 1896.

[4] *loc. cit.*, *n.* 385.

"With reference to frequent reception of Communion, in this same month of June (1554), Father Salmerón sent to Rome certain selected passages from the Fathers, soon after he had returned to Naples."

Polanco sent Salmerón's pamphlet to Father Benedict Palmio, by direction of St Ignatius, as may be seen from the letter of July 21, 1554, where he writes:—"I enclose for you a short treatise on the frequent reception of Holy Communion, which I have received from Father Salmerón in Naples."[1]

71. Father Cristóbal de Madrid was a contemporary of Salmerón, and had been admitted into the Society in 1550 by St Ignatius, whose last sigh he had the privilege of receiving.

Father de Madrid's doctrine is identical with Salmerón's, and was made public in a pamphlet entitled *De frequenti usu sanctissimi Eucharistiæ sacramenti libellus.* The first edition was printed at Naples early in 1556, and many other editions followed. We have before us the Venetian edition, *Ad candentis Salamandræ insigne*, 1574. It is a pamphlet of 92 pages 18mo. It was written by order of St Ignatius, perhaps because Father Salmerón on account of his many occupations had no time to finish his own work. It is probable that Father de Madrid availed himself of Salmerón's notes, and that then Salmerón himself adopted the doctrine of the pamphlet

[1] *Monumenta, loc. cit., n.* 2.

to a great extent as his own, since they agree in many points, not merely in the general doctrine, but also in the form of expression, and even in the very words. Compare for example, Nos. 65-68 of this commentary with what de Madrid writes on pages 8 and 9 of his pamphlet. It was first printed at Naples, because there were many persons there who communicated weekly, and this practice brought down on them unfavourable criticism from persons apparently good and pious.[1]

The same thing happened at Saragossa, and in consequence, Father Polanco that same year sent to Father Alphonsus Román a large number of copies of the work referred to, to be distributed in the capital of Aragón.[2]

72. Father de Madrid[3] lays down that for his purpose it is enough to show that for those in a state of grace it is more profitable to communicate through love of Christ at least once a week, than to keep away from Communion for fear of irreverence. He takes as a first principle, and makes it good,[4] that to communicate holily and profitably, even every day, it is sufficient to be free from mortal sin, and to have a right intention. If sometimes the Fathers

[1] *Monumenta, loc. cit.*, vol. 5, p. 178, *n.* 514; vol. 6, p. 244, *n.* 934.

[2] Orlandini, *Hist. S.J.*, lib. 16, *n.* 46, p. 406, Antuerpiæ, 1620; Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque, etc.*, vol. 5, col. 278; *Monumenta, loc. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 28, *n.* 2; vol. 6, p. 538, *n.* 2327.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-7, 64.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 15, 41, 42, 64.

and Doctors of the Church require other and more perfect dispositions, they lay them down not as indispensable, but as more conducive to the deriving of greater fruit; and these dis-dispositions are often, he adds, the result of frequent Communion.

"If in some passages of their writings they seem to make excellence in virtue a necessary condition, it is my opinion that they lay this down, not as indispensable, but as profitable; since the more perfect the dispositions of the communicant the more readily does our munificent Master pour out His graces. It follows from this that a lack of piety and devotion, and a want of reverence, such as shall not be incompatible with a state of grace, do not make a man unworthy to receive the Sacrament. He may even receive it with fruit and with profit, with this want of reverence and devotion, for the effect of receiving the sacraments is frequently to supply this defect."[1]

Here we have exactly the teaching of Pius X. in the decree we are studying. Father de Madrid further informs us[2] that it is the doctrine of the saints that the best way to dispose oneself to receive Communion well and frequently is frequent Communion itself. The whole pamphlet is so much in agreement with the decree of Pius X., that even now its publication would be most opportune. In it will be found gathered together

[1] *Monumenta*, p. 9. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

the testimony of Holy Scripture, and of the Fathers, the practice of the early Christians, and the soundest theological arguments that can be adduced in favour of frequent Communion.

73. St Ignatius, before ordering Father de Madrid to write in support of frequent Communion, had already given the same order to Father Andrés de Oviedo; but as he was chosen for the mission to Ethiopia he could not bring his task to completion.[1]

Father Bobadilla also, as early as 1554, composed another little work, entitled *De laudabili et fructuosa Eucharistiæ frequentatione libellus;* but I have had no opportunity of seeing it.[2]

(*b*) *The Carthusian Molina*

74. Some years later, 1607, Father Antonio de Molina, a Carthusian of Miraflores, published his work *Instrucción de Sacerdotes*, and in the seventh treatise he spoke of frequent Communion. His doctrine, in close agreement with the decree of Pius X., may be summarised in the following paragraphs taken from his seventh treatise.

75. In Chapter V. he lays down certain directions, of which the chief are as follows:—

[1] *Monumenta, loc. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 28, *n.* 35.
[2] *Ibid., loc. cit., n.* 2.

I. "All laymen must submit to the direction of their confessor.

II. "The confessor should inquire well into the intention and object of the person who desires to practise frequent Communion.

III. "The state of life of the person should be taken into consideration, to see if he can frequent the sacrament without neglect of the duties of his position.

76. V. "It should be noted whether he derives profit or not from Communion: however, Communion should not be lightly discontinued, even when no clear profit is discernible.

VI. "Putting off Communion does not help one to communicate with greater reverence or in better dispositions: on the contrary, frequent Communion is a great help in this respect.

77. IX. "The frequent reception of the Blessed Sacrament gives great honour to Christ Our Lord, and is very pleasing to him."[1]

78. He writes further on:[2]—

"It remains still to ascertain when a person may be said to be in due dispositions to receive Communion. This question we have already settled in Chapter V., where we declare it to be the teaching of saints and theologians, that whoever is not conscious of mortal sin, or if he is so has confessed with contrition and a purpose

[1] Barcelona, 1746, p. 511 *sqq.* [2] chap. 7, § 2.

of amendment, is in a fit state to communicate, and can do so lawfully, laudably, and profitably.

79. "Moreover, we have declared it to be the teaching of SS. Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Augustine, that the dispositions which suffice to communicate *once*, are sufficient to communicate often and *even daily*. The reason that St Chrysostom adds is quite clear, for it is the same Lord who is received and consecrated on Easter day, as on other days, and the same holiness surrounds that sacred mystery.

80. "Accordingly, if a person, who communicates on Easter day to fulfil the precept of the Church, was in a fit state to receive the Blessed Sacrament, and if on the next day he is in the same dispositions and wishes to receive Communion, he may do so, and so too on the third and the fourth and every other day of the year or of his whole life. The reason of this is that his having communicated yesterday has not robbed him in any way of the dispositions required for to-day's Communion, but rather has made them more perfect. The oftener he communicates the better disposed he will be, as he either never loses his good dispositions, or if he does so, he regains them by contrition and confession.

81. "Would to God that many had, or that all Christians should desire to preserve, the good dispositions in which they once made a good Communion, even though they may not

have been very perfect but merely sufficient, and should wish to communicate daily in the same dispositions. In that case they have a right to demand Communion, and whoever denies it to them, or prevents them from communicating in such dispositions would do them a grievous injustice and injury."[1]

82. "I wish and desire that every preacher and confessor and every director of souls should desire and bring about a great increase in the number of those who try to fit themselves for daily Communion, so that that ancient and most holy practice, which can hardly be reintroduced universally, may be restored at least partially and as widely as possible."[2]

(*c*) *The Benedictines Marzilla and Valderas*

83. Later still, in the year 1611, the Spanish Benedictine Marzilla taught the same doctrine in his *Memorial Compostelano*,[3] and again in

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 531, 532.

[2] *Ibid.*, 532; see also No. 14, art. 5.

[3] The full title is "Memorial Compostelano, which the monks who are confessors of the Monastery of San Martín de Santiago of the Order of St Benedict presented to the most illustrious Prince Maximilian of Austria, Archbishop of Santiago, as to the frequency with which it is profitable for seculars to receive the most Holy Sacrament." After the title the "Memorial" begins as follows:—"I, Friar Pedro de Marzilla, an unworthy monk and confessor of San Martin de Santiago, in my own name and the name of the other confessors of this convent, declare that it has come to our

1613 at greater length in his *Adiciónes al Memorial.*

Martín de Valderas, a Benedictine also, followed in Marzilla's steps. Among the more striking points of Marzilla's work, and the most in agreement with Pius X.'s decree, we read the following :—

"It is a less evil to communicate with but slight devotion than to omit Communion."[1]

The headings of Chapters XIII., XIV., XVII., XVIII., and XX. of the *Adiciones* read as follows :—"That no more perfect dispositions are required to communicate on consecutive days

knowledge that certain persons, secretly and without daring to make themselves known, urge your illustrious Lordship to put a stop to a practice that certain devout laymen of this city have taken up and diligently carry out, I mean, the practice of receiving the most Holy Sacrament of the altar every day, or, at least on most days of the week."

The "Adiciones" were printed for the first time in Saragossa in 1613, in 8vo. This is the edition I have before me. In it the "Memorial" takes up pp. 1-27. On p. 31 begin the "Adiciones al Memorial Compostelano." At the end of the "Adiciones" (pp. 150 *sqq.*) the author adds a letter which, under date of April 7, 1613, he addressed to the General of the Society at the time, Father Claudius Aquaviva, in which, after declaring that in the colleges of the Society where he had been educated, he had conceived an ardent desire that every Christian should communicate as frequently as possible, he begs him amongst other things to do away with the 26th rule. See No. 41. Then follows another letter from Father de Ponte to the author, attacking his position (pp. 154 *sqq.*), and an answer to this (pp. 157 *sqq.*), etc.

[1] *Memorial*, p. 13 ; treated more fully in the *Adiciones*, chap. 12, pp. 104 *sqq.*

than to communicate at intervals of many days.

"That in this matter it comes to the same to advise frequent Communion, and to advise daily Communion.

"That it is quite consonant at the present time with the wish of the Church to advise and exhort people to daily Communion.

"That Christ Our Lord is greatly honoured and pleased when Christians approach the Holy Table daily.

"That neither the example of certain saints who communicated only at long intervals, nor rules that settle special days for Communion, ought to lead to the omission of daily Communion."[1]

84. As to the obedience of the penitent to the advice of the confessor in regard to Communion, Marzilla's views are not so much in harmony with the decree of Pius X.

"Once the confessor has granted absolution to a penitent . . . even though he should tell him not to communicate, the penitent is not bound to obey him, if there exist no further impediment to Communion."

This is his teaching on p. 21, and he supports his opinion on the passage of St Augustine, which we have already quoted.[2]

[1] *Memorial*, pp. 109 *sqq.*; 115 *sqq.*; 124 *sqq.*; 130 *sqq.*; 136 *sqq.*

[2] No. 29 (note)

"From this it appears," continues Marzilla, "the saint in this case allows the penitent to reject the direction of the confessor,"[1] and he repeats the same statement in the *Adiciones*.[2] Again he writes:[3]—

"They also are mistaken who consider that a further permission from the confessor over and above the sacramental absolution is required to communicate even every day. This necessity is grounded merely in their own imaginations, since no decree nor other sufficient authority for it can be adduced."

Father Mauro de Valderas says that the poorly instructed, as they cannot distinguish between mortal and venial sin, require their confessor's permission.[4]

85. Antonio Bernaldo, Antonio Velásquez Pinto, and Martín de San José (and Juan Sánchez also) followed Marzilla in his opinion on this last point.[5] Father Pichón, S.J., introduced this same teaching into France in his work, *L'esprit de Jésus Christ et de l'église sur la fréquente communion* (1745).[6] He must have ventured further than was safe, and his work was placed on the Index by decrees of August 13, 1748, and September 11, 1750, and on the Index it still remains.

[1] *Memorial*, p. 21. [2] *Ibid.*, chap. xxii., p. 148.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 150.
[4] *De Lugo, De Euch.*, disp. 17, *nn.* 5 *sqq.*
[5] Cárdenas, *Crisis theologica*, disp. 66.
[6] Rosset, *De Euch.*, *n.* 935.

(*d*) *The Secular Priests Juan Sánchez and Juan de Vega*

86. Among the most ardent champions of frequent Communion Juan Sánchez, a native of Avila and a secular priest, holds no mean position. He defends it at length in his work, *Selectae et practicae disputationes.* This work first saw the light at Madrid in the year 1624.[1]

87. In disputation 22, No. 7, he sets forth his doctrine in the following terms, so much in harmony with articles 1 and 2 of Pius X.'s decree:—

"I consider it as certain that no further dis-

[1] This work, which Diana declared "worthy of immortality," was placed on the Index by a decree of December 3, 1642, with the note "Donec corrigatur." It still appears in the last edition of the Index (p. 273). The reason for his prohibition seems to have been certain tendencies to laxity observable in the work. In disputation 19, No. 71, p. 133, of the first edition (p. 107 of the Lyons edition, 1643) occurs the proposition condemned by Innocent XI., March 2, 1679, No. 4:—"An infidel is excused from his infidelity by reliance on a less probable opinion." See Gury-Ferreres, vol 1, *n.* 57, and the chronological list of condemned propositions. In disputation 44, No. 50 (p. 411 in the first edition, and p. 313 in the Lyons edition), he teaches that "a judge may give judgment in accordance with a less probable opinion," which is the second of the propositions condemned by Innocent XI. on the same day as the last quoted. See Gury-Ferreres, vol. 1, *n.* 73; vol. 2, *n.* 1, etc. He has also the following proposition: "Any opinion that is theoretically probable is also probable in practice." Disp. 44, *n.* 65 (first edition, p. 421; Lyons edition, p. 321).

position is required for daily Communion than a conscience free from mortal sin: it being understood that Communion is not received from motives of vanity, and that at the time of Communion there exist no other obligation which must be neglected if Communion is received, or again that no unworthy purpose is in view, and that the person who is in these dispositions, *i.e.*, free from mortal sin and the other impediments before mentioned, is acting under good advice."

88. At the end of this disputation he sums up his doctrine in this way:—

"Finally it will be understood, from what has been said throughout the whole of this disputation, how much in harmony it is with the views of theologians, with the councils, with the declarations of cardinals, and with the fathers, that laymen *who are free from mortal sin and who communicate with a right intention* should DAILY receive the Holy Eucharist: since its actual reception is a more perfect act of virtue than the desire of receiving the Blessed Sacrament, and brings greater profit to the recipient, while it conduces to the greater glory of God and the praise of His divine liberality."[1]

89. It is worth noting that at one time he thought this opinion absurd and had defended the opposite opinion, as he himself notes.[2]

90. In the 28th disputation, *nn.* 5 *sqq.*, he

[1] *Selectae et practicae disputationes, n.* 52, p. 143.

[2] *Ibid., n.* 18, p. 133.

maintains that the confessor has no authority to deprive his penitents of Communion to the end that they may correct venial faults, and the penitent who is not conscious of mortal sin *will not sin* in this case by communicating in disobedience to the confessor's command.[1]

This opinion can easily be defended and is in conformity with articles 1, 2, 3, and 5 of Pius X.'s decree.

91. However, in the 29th disputation (*nn.* 4 *sqq.*) he goes further and maintains that the penitent in the case proposed *will do better* not to follow the advice of the confessor.[2] This is directly opposed to what Pius X. says in the decree (article 5).

92. In 1659 Juan de Vega published his "Reply apologetic, moral, scholastic, on the frequent use of sacramental confession, wherein are treated conjointly and discussed other matters necessary to be known for the giving advice as to the frequent reception of this sacrament and of the Holy Eucharist."

In this work he maintains the doctrine of Salmerón and of the Carthusian Molina.

93. He writes as follows :—

Note 1. "There is here laid down and established by proofs, the great probability of the opinion that advises daily Communion for persons of every state, provided they are in a state of

[1] *Selectae et practicae disputationes, n.* 31.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 190 *sqq.*

grace and communicate with a right intention, and without neglect of the duties of their state."[1]

He establishes this proposition with arguments much like those given by Molina.

94. He enumerates next the writers who support this opinion, and goes on to say :—

"Besides these there hold this opinion the very learned and holy Father Marzilla, Father Cristóbal Moreno, Ossio, Doctor Juan Sánchez, Doctor Jerome Pérez, whose works many learned men have judged favourably of. Doctor Frutos, whose defence of daily Communion was approved of by the professors of the University of Salamanca, and many other fathers, masters, and doctors of Madrid, Toledo, and other places, the Friars Minor of St Antony of Padua in the city of Seville in their learned defence of daily Communion, Father Escobar in the book *Alientos de flores espirituales*, Father Juan Falconi (✝ 1638) in his book *Pan quotidiano*, and many authors I omit to mention."[2]

To the authors cited by Vega we must add Mateo Villarroel in his work *De la necesidad de la oración y frequente communión*, quoted by Dublanchy.[3]

95. In a proposition in the 3rd note Vega writes thus :—"There is no real irreverence in approaching Communion with habits of venial

[1] *Selectate practicae disputationes*, p. 6, Madrid, 1659.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[3] *Diction. de Théol. Cathol.*, vol. 2, col. 538, Paris, 1906.

sin, because it is not itself a venial sin to approach Communion in this state."

At the beginning of his book, he inserts a long list of professors and learned persons of the universities of Salamanca and Alcalá who advocated daily Communion, and at the end of the book he gives all these approbations word for word.[1]

96. Juan de Vega also[2] maintains that the penitent ought to obey the confessor in this matter when he tells him not to communicate. He recognizes, however, that Marzilla and Juan Sánchez were of a different opinion. "The second point concerns the obedience due to the confessor when he forbids Communion. Although Doctor Sánchez, following Father Marzilla, and himself followed by others, not without reason does not think it proper to abstain from Communion for this second cause, yet I do not agree with him for the reason given in § 11 *of the merit of obedience.*"

This is quite in accordance with what Pius X. sets down in article. 5.

97. Forty years before Vega printed his work, another work was published in which, though with some misgiving, the same doctrine is defended. Its title is, "A defence of frequent Communion and its wonderful effects, addressed to the Sacred Province of St Paul by Father

[1] *Diction. de Théol. Cath.*, pp. 213-228. [2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 183.

Joseph de Santa Maria, unworthy son of our Holy Father Francis, of the same province." (Madrid, 1619.)

I have said that the author defends his opinion with some misgiving, in spite of some passages such as the following :—

"Nevertheless I think it right to observe, as I have already stated in other places (so that no timorous soul may omit Holy Communion when it finds itself without this special preparation), that for it to have great merit in the sight of God and be a means of grace, strictly speaking, no further disposition is required than to approach Communion free from mortal sin. It is right, therefore, that everyone learned or ignorant should be convinced, and hold it for certain that these less perfect dispositions are sufficient even for daily Communion, though they have not those perfect dispositions which the saints desire, and which it is most becoming we should have."[1]

However, when he comes to the practical application of his doctrine he writes thus :—

"Finally, I do and always shall think it advisable, bearing of course in mind the age, condition, and progress in virtue of different persons, to allow Holy Communion three times a week to all those who are desirous of profiting by spiritual exercises, provided, as I have already said, they strive to avoid deliberate venial sins, and I am of opinion that rather than deter the faithful from Communion by impressing upon them

[1] p. 91.

exaggerated feelings of awe, the zeal of good and prudent confessors should be directed to exhorting their penitents to seek the divine love and the gifts which God lavishes upon us in this sacrament. Only, as I said above, in the case of those who do not reap any profit from frequent Communion, or whose obedience and humility need to be tested by their confessor, Holy Communion may be prohibited. In one word, although I know that there is a learned man who much disapproves of my views, and some others who are not quite reconciled to them, my experience and my conscience teach me (and I shall always follow their directions, *quidquid aliqui dicant*, unless God suggests to me the contrary) that I am doing right in administering Holy Communion every day to any man or woman, married or unmarried, who, detached from the miseries and vanities of this world, although living subject to them, keep their souls undefiled by mortification of the passions and senses, by frequent aspirations and the continual presence of God, and if physical strength allows it, chastise the body, so that the soul may be inflamed with the love of God through constant prayer, and profit by spiritual exercises according to the method given above."

This looks very like the opinion considered in the first part of this treatise. He holds heartily the appropriateness of the penitent following the direction of his confessor with regard to the

frequency of Communion, and attacks Marzilla on this point.[1]

98. Even earlier than Juan de Vega's book, is a work entitled "Epilogue or recapitulation of the arguments and principal reasons that urge the faithful to daily Communion after the custom of the Early Church, by Doctor Antonio Bernaldo de Braojos, a native of Torrelaguna, formerly Fellow in the Faculty of Theology in the renowned University of Alcalá, and at present parish priest of St Martín de la Vega, dedicated to Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Published by permission at Alcalá by Francisco Ropero."

It[2] is a short summary of the treatises of Marzilla and Sánchez, whose opinions it quotes and follows, even where they have gone wrong in speaking of the confessor.[3] On this point the author writes: "This doctrine (viz. Marzilla's as to the authority of the confessor), which I do not dwell upon, because if misunderstood it will do harm, although I believe it to be correct, I have carefully avoided making use of, as I am of opinion there is danger of ill-instructed persons

[1] p. 85.

[2] The work is undated, but from the approbation it may be gathered it was printed in 1645. The edition we quote from is a reprint made in Madrid in 1876. The book contains 71 pages in octavo, of which "the notices to the pious and devout reader" occupy eight. Then follows the "epilogue," which has no division into chapters, articles, or paragraphs, etc.

[3] See above, *n.* 84 and 91.

misunderstanding it, and in consequence of their disregarding the advice of the confessor even in cases where it is binding, on the plea that they themselves know or can judge better, a case by no means rare."

The teaching of Bernaldo de Braojos may be summarised in the following passage that occurs on pages 25 and 26 of the Epilogue:—"This presupposed, the safe, certain, and true conclusion is that for every Christian, provided he is not conscious of mortal sin, or being conscious of it, goes to confession (as he is bound to do under precept), even though he has to acknowledge many shortcomings and imperfections, daily Communion is a practice at once lawful, pious, and praiseworthy, and it is better not to omit Communion for any motive of fear, reverence, or humility."[1]

IV

THE JANSENIST HERESY

99. To what an extent the Society of Jesus succeeded in promoting the practice of frequent Communion, may be gathered not only from what has been already said (No. 70), but also

[1] In 1735, Jeronimo Fransone published in Genoa a pamphlet in support of this same opinion. This pamphlet which we have by us is entitled, *Racolta di ragioni, de autoritá di S. Tommaso, colle quali anche sole si prova essere la communione frequente e cotidiana di maggior gloria di Dio etc. . . .*

from the testimony of St Thomas of Villanova. In his will, he acknowledges his indebtedness to the Jesuit fathers for the great good they had done in his diocese of Valencia, and declares amongst other things, that thanks to their labours the faithful who before confessed and communicated only once a year, now approach the sacraments every Sunday. "What is especially worthy of note, the faithful who formerly confessed scarcely once a year, now on account of their exhortations and the grace of the Holy Spirit, confess their sins and receive the most holy Body of Christ every Sunday."[1]

No less significant is the encomium passed on their work by Blessed Juan de Ribera, in a sermon preached in Gandía, May 13, 1607, in which he says:—"It has always been a cherished view of mine that the strongest testimony to the sanctity of the Blessed Father Ignatius is the society he has founded. So holy and so widespead has been its influence, that it has brought about an extraordinary change of life, and a great increase in attendance at the sacraments. For whereas in our forefathers' times for the most part men were satisfied with approaching the Holy Table once a year, and amongst the whole body of the faithful none were to be found who communicated oftener and even then with but little fervour of preparation, now on the contrary wherever the Society is established, many persons given to devotion and

[1] Astrain, *Historia de la Comp. de Jésus*, vol. 1, p. 660.

prayer are constant in their attendance at the Holy Table."[1]

100. Father Harnoldo Hessem reported to St Ignatius in a letter written from Louvain, January 16, 1533, that Adrian Adriaenssens, S.J., himself gave Holy Communion to his mother and some friends twice a week, and to his sisters every day.[2] He writes: "F. Adriaenssen's discernment in spiritual matters I consider sufficiently evident from the fact that . . . he has many communicants among them, his own mother and some of his friends who communicate twice a week, while his sisters approach the Holy Table every day with much fervour."

101. This movement in favour of frequent Communion aroused not merely the indignation of Protestants, but also the displeasure and criticisms of a number of Catholics. These latter were persons of learning and piety, and were animated with the best intentions, but were strangely blind in this matter, and opposed frequent Communion both in public and in private with extraordinary vehemence. One person, as well known by his learned writings as for his hatred of the Society of Jesus, went so far as to declare from the pulpit in Valladolid in 1556, that one of the best indications he had that antichrist was to appear in a short time, or

[1] Astrain, p. 664.

[2] *Monumenta Historica, S.J. Litterae quadrimestres*, vol. 2, p. 141.

perhaps had even now been born, was the frequent reception of the sacraments then in vogue.[1] On reading this, one can understand the language of Salmerón as quoted towards the end of *n.* 68.[2]

So earnest were such persons in representing frequent Communion as a most dangerous practice and the Jesuits, who preached it, as suspected of heresy, that the Cistercian Father Luis de Estrada, Abbot of Huerta in Aragón, relates that being once in a very Catholic home the lady of the house said to him: "Thanks be to God, Father Abbot, that in this house we have never been in the habit of communicating frequently but only at long intervals." "The good woman spoke thus," adds Father Estrada, "because she thought if she communicated frequently she would fall into heresy."

It is of such as these that Father Cristóbal de Madrid speaks in the preface of the pamphlet we have quoted: "That in such stormy times as ours the impiety of heretics should so bitterly attack the most holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, need not cause surprise to zealous Christians and lovers of Jesus. But that Christians and men of piety should be so opposed to the frequent reception of this sacrament, that they cease not (for what purpose I fail to understand) with the greatest vehemence and perseverance to dissuade men from it, and attack it as a dangerous superstition, to the great scandal of God's Church

[1] Astrain, vol. 2, p. 96. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 103.

and of all good men, this is what causes me the greatest grief. I wonder that herein they do not recognize Satan, not indeed transforming himself into an angel of light, but openly envious of that most abundant grace which, when it is worthily received, is poured out upon us so generously in this great sacrament. For by its means we can turn aside the weapons with which he so continuously attacks us to prevent our attaining that happiness which he himself by his pride forfeited."

Perhaps these virulent attacks made by Catholics and even by religious against the frequent reception of the sacraments will suffice to explain the circumspection with which St Ignatius acted in granting Holy Communion more frequently than once a week;[1] at any rate they prepared the way for the work of Jansenism.

[1] As to this regard for the circumstances of the time Father Cristóbal de Madrid speaks thus (*loc. cit.*, p. 42): "We are of opinion that in certain places, where the practice of frequent Communion does not exist, it is better to delay the introduction of the practice than to introduce it with danger of scandal to the weak; for a short time only, however, until by means of the preachers of the word of God or by the practice of pious people, both high and low may come to understand the merit and utility of this custom, and receive the Eucharist with joy and to the profit of their souls. Thus will others through their example be led and attracted to the profitable reception of this sacrament. For as the common sort are uncultured and slow to perceive the gift of God, they are led rather by the example of those whose hearts the Lord has touched, than by discussion and reasoning. We must also beware of blaming or of irritating

102. The Jansenists, availing themselves of the support thus afforded, employed all their powers and their refinements of hypocrisy to keep the faithful from Holy Communion. The celebrated Abbot of Saint-Cyran, Jean Duvergier, the intimate friend of Jansenius and the first to propagate Jansenistic ideas in France, wrote a treatise against frequent Communion, which passed from hand to hand, and spread its poison under the cloak of piety. As an answer to this pamphlet Father de Sesmaisons, S.J., published one on frequent Communion. He wrote anonymously, and his work was little else than a translation into French of the chief arguments of the Carthusian Molina in his *Instrucción de Sacerdotes* of which we have already spoken.

103. In defence of the Abbot of Saint-Cyran and in reply to Father Sesmaisons, Antoine Arnauld published in 1643 a work entitled,[1] "De la fréquente communion : où les sentiments

such as abstain from frequent Communion ; let them rather be instructed and enlightened in the spirit of sweetness. And to go no further into detail we leave all this to be studied, pondered, and reduced to practice by the piety and prudence of the director."

[1] The same author translated his work into Latin with the title, "De frequenti communione, in quo SS. Patrum, Pontificum, et Conciliorum de Paenitentiae et Eucharistiae Sacramentorum usu sententiae summa fide proferuntur, ut pro norma omnibus esse possint, tum iis qui serio ad Deum sese referre cogitant tum maxime Pastoribus et Sacerdotibus animarum saluti studiosis." The motto of the work is "Sancta Sanctis" (Thesaurus Theologicus, tom. 10, pp. 1039, 1384).

des Pères et des Papes et des conciles touchant l'usage des sacrements de Penitence et d'Eucharistie sont fidèlement exposés."

In spite of his pretended zeal for purity of life and his desire to re-establish in the Church the fervour of the early Christians, his aim was to keep the faithful from the heavenly banquet of the Eucharist.

According to Arnauld to communicate worthily it is not sufficient to be free from sin, mortal and venial, but a higher degree of perfection is required, superior to the perfection of the apostles and saints themselves.[1]

104. He taught besides that to allow their being admitted to Communion, it was not sufficient for Christians to confess their sins, but that absolution and Communion ought to be deferred until they have satisfied for their sins by a penance greater than that imposed on them for their sacramental penance.[2]

Arnauld's work was approved and recommended in the period from 1643 to 1645 by four archbishops, seventeen bishops, and by an entire Provincial Council.[3] Twenty-four further approbations follow from as many doctors of the

[1] Arnauld, p. 1, cap. 4, p. 1117, and Petavius, *loc. cit.*, pp. 261 *sqq.*

[2] This doctrine had already been condemned as upheld by Pedro de Osma (Gury-Ferreres, vol. 1, p. lv.). *Cf.* Arnauld's preface, and Pt. ii. of his work, p. 1185. Also Petavius, *loc. cit.*, lib. 1, cap. 4, p. 216, and lib. 7, p. 298.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 1088-1901. Edition quoted above.

Sorbonne.[1] With such cleverness did Arnauld spread his errors, and so subtle was the diffusion of the spirit of Jansenism.

The strangest thing of all is that the four archbishops and as many as ten bishops wrote to Urban VIII. a fervent appeal in favour of Arnauld's work, on April 5, 1644. Two other no less laudatory appeals were sent up by the surviving prelates (for some were already dead) to Innocent X. on July 21, 1645, and on March 2, 1646, and they sent moreover a delegate to defend the work personally. All three appeals may be read at the end of the work mentioned.[2] According to these prelates Arnauld's work breathes the spirit of the great saints, and especially of St Charles Borromeo. "It is doing," they declare, "much good in France, and has led to remarkable conversions not only of sinners but also of calvinistic heretics." They beg the Pope to defend it and lend it his support, and condemn those who attack it.

105. The nuns of Port Royal, a community made up for the most part of sisters and cousins of Arnauld, who was their spiritual director, went so far as to omit even the Easter Communion, thus passing the year without communicating through reverence for this sacrament.[3]

106. As a refutation of Arnauld's work, Father

[1] Arnauld, pp. 1097-1109. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 1369-1378.
[3] Rosset, *De Euch.*, *n.* 935 (Chambery, 1876, p. 459).

Petavius in 1644 published a learned work in six books (adding afterwards two others in answer to Hermant), entitled, *De pœnitentia publica et præparatione ad communionem.*[1]

107. Rhodes divided his treatise into two parts, one in reply to Arnauld, and the other in reply to Marzilla.

108. In spite of such refutations, Jansenistic ideas continued to be craftily diffused, and ended by infecting to a greater or less extent many of the faithful, and not a few ecclesiastics and religious.

V

OTHER EXTREME VIEWS

109. Other authors, on the contrary, took an opposite view of the subject, and went so far as to affirm that daily Communion was prescribed by divine law. Pinto, for example, says: "Obedience to divine law obliges us to receive Holy Communion every day, and this doctrine has been expressly taught by St Jerome, St Cyril, St Rupert, St Bonaventure, St Justin, St Cyprian, Paschasius, and many other fathers."[2]

110. There was a similarly erroneous opinion

[1] *Petavii Opera Venetiis*, 1745, tom. 4, p. 211.

[2] Disc. 4, c. 12, No. 2.

which maintained that everybody attending the Holy Sacrifice was bound by divine law to receive Holy Communion as well. A view mentioned and refuted by Suárez.[1]

111. With regard to Holy Communion on Good Friday, Juan de Vega says: "It is not nor has ever been, the intention of the Church to forbid one single Communion in the whole year, as she does not keep anyone from the reception of this sacrament either on Good Friday or on Holy Saturday. For this reason many prominent authors hold that it is laudable and lawful to receive Holy Communion on those days, since there is no law which forbids it."

112. "This opinion with regard to Good Friday is maintained by Vázques, Saa, Hurtado, Ledesma, Vega, Durandus, Diana, Fagúndez, Enríquez, Victorelo, Arboleda, Pérez, Fillucio and Laymann. The last-named author cites in his favour Amaralio, Silvestro, Suárez, and Juan Sánchez. The Friars Minor of the Convent of St Antony at Seville quote with approval the above writers in their learned apology in defence of Holy Communion.

113. "Besides, we may name Silvio, Azor, and Baseo, who refer to the authors already mentioned, and finally Father Granados, Father Juan de la Cruz, Tanero, Molpesio, and Machado.

[1] *De Euch.*, disp. 69, vol. 3, *n.* 3.

Leandro del Sacramento also follows the opinion of these theologians, and he as well as Machado brings forward in support of his view the fact that in the parish church of St Martin at Madrid, Communion is always given on Good Friday; and I may add that the same custom is kept in the convent of our Lady of Mercy, and in another church attached to the parish church of St Martín, and in some other places where this laudable practice has been introduced.

114. "There is no doubt that Communion on Holy Saturday is licit as the same authors maintain."[1]

115. Velázquez Pinto defended this view as Cárdenas says in the passage already noted, and he vigorously refutes Pinto's opinion as well as the general assertion that daily Communion is prescribed by divine law.

116. These two errors are mentioned and condemned in the decree "Cum ad aures," wherein the following practices are also prohibited, namely, administering the Eucharist in private houses or private oratories, allowing sick persons, when not dangerously ill, to receive Holy Communion in bed (some used to keep the Blessed Sacrament in their pockets enclosed in a small silver box, or to ask the priest to bring it secretly to them), and out of false devotion

[1] *Apud Cárdenas, loc. cit.*, pp. 8 and 9.

received several hosts at the same time or of unusual size.[1]

Such abuses were defended by authors who held the second opinion, and many of these practices were in vogue chiefly in Spain.[2]

[1] The text of this decree is to be found in the Appendix.

[2] We find a clear exposition of these errors together with the difficulties confronting the authorities, when trying to put an end to such abuses, in a valuable document entitled, *De Communione Quotidiana et Domestica.* It was drawn up by F. Lorenzo de Laurea, who was subsequently created Cardinal by Innocent XI. "In some countries," he says, "and to some extent in Spain, the practice of daily Communion has become so common and is so widespread among laymen as well as among nuns and their servants, that we fear that esteem for the Holy Eucharist will be lessened, unless the Holy See takes active measures in the matter. The evil is increased by the fact that confessors and preachers endeavour to impress upon the faithful the necessity of frequent Communion, both in their sermons and in their writings, and insist on it as though it were prescribed by divine law, and go so far as to say, that absence of mortal sin is the only preparation required. Besides this, laymen receive the Eucharist at home or even in bed, and there are regulars who bring the Blessed Sacrament to them in their pockets, or take it from private oratories in which they celebrate Mass under the plea that, daily Communion being prescribed by divine law, any obstacle which prevents us from going to church renders such a proceeding lawful. Some, too, give their friends two hosts in order that the Blessed Sacrament may remain with them for a longer time, a fact which, when known, gives rise to jealousies. It is true that the Sacred Congregation of the Council when consulted by the Bishop of Brescia on a similar point, answered that the bishops cannot assign certain days on which the faithful have either to abstain from or to receive Holy Communion, but that it rests with the confessor to advise his penitents according to

These abuses arose, as is so often the case, from ignorance of the ecclesiastical law in force at the time, and from a desire to apply to our time concessions which were granted by the Church to certain countries, only under extraordinary circumstances. It would seem that even now the Mariavites in Russian Poland go so far as to allow the faithful to take consecrated hosts home with them.

117. *N.B.* We call the attention of our readers to a remarkable passage of St Basil, which shows us the discipline formerly observed in some oriental churches.

Singulis etiam diebus communicare ac participem esse sancti corporis et sanguinis Christi bonum est ac perutile.	It is indeed good and useful to communicate every day and to partake of Christ's holy body and blood. . . .

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their dispositions and devotion in individual cases. The congregation likewise recommended preachers not to advise frequency of Communion without insisting on a due preparation for it. For he that 'eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.' However, as in the present case, preachers and confessors themselves who inculcate frequent Communion are the defenders of the errors mentioned above, we must decide not only what is to be believed, but also what is to be done" (*Analecta Juris Pontificii*, series 8, col. 798).

We read, too, in an information given probably by Card. Casanate, that one of the abuses to be condemned is "To receive two hosts at the same time in order that the Blessed Sacrament may remain longer with the communicant, such a practice being against the rites of the Roman Church" (*Analecta Juris Pontificii*, *loc. cit.*, col. 817).

. . . Nos quidem quater singulis hebdomadis communicamus, dominica die, quarta die, in parasceve et sabbato et aliis diebus si sancti alicujus memoria recolatur. . . . Omnes in solitudinibus monachi, ubi non est sacerdos, communionem domi servantes, suis ipsorum manibus sumunt. . . . Alexandriae autem, et in Aegypto unusquisque etiam de plebe, ut plurimum, habet domi communionem et quando vult, per se ipse fit illius particeps. Etiam in Ecclesia sacerdos porrigit partem, quam qui suscipit, cum omni potestate retinet, et sic ori admovet propria manu.

We however communicate four times a week, on the Lord's day, on the fourth day, and on the parasceve and on the Sabbath, and on other days when there is a commemoration of some saint. . . . All hermits in solitudes where there is not a priest, keep the Eucharist at home and administer it to themselves. . . . In Alexandria and Egypt anyone even of the people for the most part, keeps the Eucharist in his own house, and when he wishes, he administers it to himself. Even in the Church the priest delivers the particle, and he who receives has it completely in his power, and in this way he brings it to his mouth with his own hand.[1]

St Jerome tells us that in his time the faithful in Rome and in Spain received the Eucharist every day.[2] The same practice was observed in the north of Africa in the time of St Cyprian.[3]

During the persecutions the faithful used to take home the Eucharist and administer it to themselves, and it was brought to those in prison by laymen, acolytes or boys.[4]

[1] Migne, P. G., vol. 32, col. 486.

[2] Migne, P. L., vol. 22, col. 506-672.

[3] Migne, P. L., vol. 4, col. 531.

[4] Tertullianus, P. L., vol. 1., col. 1182; St Cyprianus, P. L., vol. 4, col. 486.

In the sixteenth century Pope St Pius V. allowed the pious Mary Queen of Scots when imprisoned by Queen Elizabeth privately to reserve the consecrated host, and she communicated herself with her own hands before she went to the scaffold. We also know that at a more recent date, the priests in the gaols of Paris during the Commune had the Eucharist brought to them by women; and finally, on August 10, 1841, the Sacred Congregation for the propagation of the faith permitted the Christians imprisoned for the faith at Tonkin to keep the Eucharist by them and to administer it with their own hands.

We shall speak subsequently of the actual discipline with regard to Communion on Good Friday and on Holy Saturday.

VI

ACTION OF THE CHURCH

(*a*) *Sixteenth Century: the Council of Trent: the Roman Catechism: the Letter from the S. C. of the Council to the Bishops of Brescia.*

118. The Church on her part has never lacked the necessary vigilance reproving abuses, correcting false ideas and condemning errors, as circumstances demanded. The Council of Trent,

alluded to in the present decree, declared that it was its earnest desire to see the practice of daily Communion more and more diffused every day ;[1] although the defenders of the first opinion, arguing from what the Council says in another passage,[2] concluded that the Holy Synod required for frequent Communion some other dispositions beyond a state of grace and a right intention. We may notice in confirmation of this statement the following quotation from the *votum* given by Cardinal Casanate in the Congregation of the Council on February 5, 1678, when the assembly met to discuss the clauses of the decree "Cum ad aures."

"With regard to preparation for Holy Communion, all must be warned and strongly cautioned that worthy reception of the most Holy Sacrament requires a previous removal of all sins, even venial sins, and of all inordinate affections, and besides that the practice of the theological virtues. Such is the doctrine which the Council of Trent commands us to teach the faithful. Moreover, the teaching of those theologians who wrote after the Council is to be interpreted in a stricter sense than has been done hitherto."[3]

[1] Sess. 22, c. 6.

[2] Admonet sancta Synodus . . . ut omnes . . . haec sacra mysteria Corporis et sanguinis ejus ea fide, constantia et firmitate, ea animi devotione, ea pietate et cultu credant et venerentur, ut panem illum supersubstantialem frequenter suscipere possint.

[3] *Analecta Juris Pontificii*, serie 8, col. 822.

119. It was the Church which published the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and the teaching given therein on frequent Communion is nothing else but a valuable commentary on the doctrine of the Council, which nevertheless was understood in the same strict sense by the above-mentioned writers.

120. On January 24, 1587, the Sacred Congregation of the Council in an answer given to the Bishop of Brescia, who wished to prevent married men, tradesmen, and even unmarried women from receiving Holy Communion on other days than Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, declared that daily reception of this sacrament was allowable.[1]

It has only been since the present commentary has been written, and even a good part of the same printed, that I have been able to acquire a complete collection of the old review, *Analecta Juris Pontificii*, where the letter addressed by the Sacred Congregation to the Bishop of Brescia is inserted. This document, which made its first appearance in print in that review, is of the greatest value in the compilation of the history of the instructions, which have been given by

[1] In 1569 the Bishop of Plasencia declared that he alone was entitled to give a decision as to the dispositions of his subjects required to receive Holy Communion frequently, and consequently he ordered that nobody should approach the Holy Table more frequently than every ninth day (Astrain, *Historia de la Asistencia de España*, vol. 2, p. 495).

the Church in connection with frequent and daily Communion.

The bishop proposed his difficulties to the Pope Sixtus V., and the matter was submitted to the Sacred Congregation of the Council on January 9, 1587.

The official information to the sacred assembly runs as follows :—

"Most illustrious and Rev. Lords.

"Frequency of Communion has become so common during the last few years in the diocese of Brescia that laymen, simple people, and even married men, in a word, persons whose minds are entirely taken up with the things of this world, not satisfied with the weekly reception of this sacrament dare to receive it every day. In consequence of this practice reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament on the part of those who communicate is lessened, and on the other hand many are scandalised to see that married men, men of business, and others not particularly conspicuous for their religious piety approach daily the Holy Table. A desire for daily Communion has likewise increased in convents, where some nuns wish to communicate every day, while others would limit themselves only to Sundays and festivals, and we need not mention that this difference of opinion even in spiritual matters gives rise to bickerings and jealousies in convents, where all singularities are to be avoided as most detrimental to religious life.

The bishop, who has at heart the welfare of the souls entrusted to him, and wishes to prevent their spiritual ruin, has for a long time reflected by what means he could remedy the present evil. He proposed to fix certain times as feast days, Wednesdays and Fridays, on which alone Holy Communion for nuns, laymen, married men, and even unmarried women might be permitted. But fearing lest such a decision given by his own authority should be contrary to the canons of the Council of Trent, he submits the whole question for decision to the Holy See. Wherefore your eminences entrusted with the interpretation of the Council of Trent are called upon to determine, according to the wishes of the bishop, what measures may be taken in the present circumstances for the spiritual welfare of his people. The question, therefore, to be settled by the congregation is this: May a bishop, in view of the decrees of the Council of Trent,[1] fix some definite days, namely, Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, on which alone Holy Communion may be permitted to laymen, married men, and even unmarried women, in order to prevent the abuses which from the daily reception of the Eucharist are likely to follow?"[2]

We find also in the *Analecta Juris Pontificii*,[3] the account of two *vota* upon this subject,

[1] Sess. 22, c. 6.

[2] *Analecta Juris Pontificii*, serie 8, col. 782, 783.

[3] *Ibid.*, serie 8, col. 784, 787.

one is anonymous, the other is subscribed by Cardinal Caraffa. The letter addressed to the Bishop of Brescia, a copy of which is given in the appendix, was the result of these discussions, and was unanimously approved on January 9. The mere reading of this important document shows us that the disciplinary part of the decree "Cum ad aures," published a hundred years later, is drawn up on the same lines as the letter to the Bishop of Brescia. We may say that except the preface and the epilogue of the decree both documents are practically the same.

(*b*) *Seventeenth Century: the decree* "Cum ad aures": *propositions condemned by Innocent XI. and Alexander VIII.*

121. This decree to which Pius X. makes reference in his Encyclical is dated February 12, 1679. Although as we have already said, it is a mere reproduction of the letter to the Bishop of Brescia, yet long discussions were held previously to its publication.

We have one valuable commentary on that decree by Cárdenas,[1] and another by Father Laurea, who was one of the six theologians appointed by the Pope to decide upon the doctrines connected with the matter under consideration, and he wrote his conclusions in accord with the opinions of his colleagues, all of which are recorded in the review *Analecta Juris*

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 425.

Pontificii,[1] wherein an anonymous commentary is also to be found.[2]

The first congregation for which Cardinal Casanate wrote the information quoted above met on October 2, 1677, at the Quirinal Palace, but discussion on this point was adjourned. A second assembly took place on February 5, 1678, when an instruction drawn up by the Cardinal Secretary was submitted to the members for approbation. It was intended for Spain, where abuses in connection with the reception of the Eucharist had assumed greater proportions, and the congregation appointed a commission to revise the articles of the instruction. The three cardinals deputed for this revision, and the Archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal Portocarrero, held a meeting on September 6, 1678, in which they approved the decisions agreed upon in the previous assembly with the addition of some slight amendments.

On September 24 it was determined to frame a new decree and have it confirmed by a brief. With regard to Holy Communion on Good Friday, the congregation decided that the "rubrics of the missal and the custom of the Roman Church were to be observed."[3]

A short account of these proceedings is given in the following document, a copy of which was handed to the cardinals on January 1, 1679.

[1] *Analecta*, serie 8, col. 798, 810. [2] *Ibid.*, col. 811-814.
[3] *Ibid.*, serie 8, col. 824.

122. "Frequent and daily Communion.

"February 5, 1678. The sacred congregation of cardinals commissioned to interpret the Council of Trent has prescribed that the regulations contained in the letter to the Bishop of Brescia on January 24, 1587, are to be put into force, as well as the instruction drawn up by the cardinal secretary, after it has been revised by their eminences the Lords Cardinals Ottobono, de Carpineo, and Colonna, Prefect of the same congregation, who together with the cardinal secretary are appointed for that purpose. The congregation likewise prescribes that a clause is to be inserted to the effect that Holy Communion on Good Friday is forbidden."[1]

On September 6, 1678, the cardinals deputed and the Archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal Portocarrero, met in private council, in which it was agreed to frame a new general decree, based on the two documents mentioned above. The draft of the same was read before the congregation on September 24, and it was decided in conformity with the conclusions of the council of the commission to have them confirmed by a brief. The clause as to the prohibition of Holy Communion on Good Friday was worded thus: *The bishops have to take care that the rubrics of the missal and the practice of the Roman Church are observed.* It was finally determined to submit the decree for revision to the theologians, D. Riccio and

[1] *Analecta*, serie 8, col. 828, 829.

Laurea, de Esparza, Loccino, Marraccio, and Miraballus, who were deputed by the Holy Father to give their opinions on the matter. They drew up their conclusions, which are now submitted to the most eminent cardinals and members of the congregation in the following scheme.

Two additional meetings of the congregation were held in January of the same year, on the 14th and 28th respectively, and finally the decree was approved on February the 4th and promulgated on the 12th. The heading of the document runs as follows:

Die 4 *Februarii* 1679. *De communione quotidiana et domestica decretum revisum et approbatum imprimendum esse et mittendum omnibus ordinariis, facto verbo cum SSmo.*

123. In this interesting decree, all the abuses noted in No. 116 are condemned, as well as the general assertion that daily Communion is not to be permitted to laymen. On the other hand, there are expressions in this document which give to the upholders of the first opinion solid grounds for maintaining that further preparation, beyond the absence of mortal sin and a right intention, is required for frequent or daily Communion. For instance, it is prescribed that confessors in allowing their penitents frequent Communion must bear in mind the purity of their consciences, the profit they derive from Holy Communion, and the progress they make in

virtue. Further on the decree says: "Let the confessor take care that each one, according to the measure of his devotion or fitting preparation, shall taste more or less frequently of the sweetness of Christ's body; and with regard to nuns, if there are some so conspicuous by purity of conscience or fervour of soul that they should be considered worthy of the daily reception of this sacrament, it may be permitted to them by their superiors." The decree also makes reference to the most careful preparation before its reception.

124. On March 2, 1679, Pope Innocent XI. condemned sixty-five erroneous propositions, the fifty-sixth of which runs thus: "Frequent confession and Communion, even in those who live after the fashion of the Gentiles, is a mark of predestination."

125. But on the other hand, Alexander VIII. proscribed among others the following two propositions defended by Baius, Arnauld, and the Jansenists.

Those who think themselves entitled to receive Holy Communion, before having done sufficient penance for their sins, are guilty of sacrilege. Likewise those who have not in themselves the most pure love of God, a love free from all taint of human affection, are to be kept from Holy Communion.

(*c*) *Nineteenth Century.*

126. With regard to the nuns of St Colette, the Archbishop of Cambray proposed to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, that in his diocese, "the said nuns and some others besides, authorised by the superiors of their churches, receive Holy Communion every day, although according to the rules and decisions given by many theologians such an extraordinary privilege may be granted only to individuals and under special circumstances. As the good sisters would regret very much to be deprived of this consolation, the Sacred Congregation is requested to decide what is to be done in the present case. On December 11, 1885, the Congregation answered, "The practice in question is a laudable one, frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist is to be promoted according to the declarations of the Council of Trent"[1] (Sess. xiii. cap. 8).

A similar answer was given by the Sacred Penitentiary on December 23, 1886. "The practice of Holy Communion among nuns is praiseworthy, although it rests with the confessor to allow it in each individual case; according to the rules given by approved authors, chiefly by St Alphonsus."[2]

127. On December 17, 1890, Leo XIII.

[1] *Dec. auth.*, *n.* 3, 648.

[2] Berardi, *Praxis*, vol. 3, *n.* 973. The *Dictionnaire de Théol. Cathol.* mentions this decree dated on November 19, 1885.

issued through the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars the decree "Quem admodum." In this decree the Pope disapproves of the fact that the superiors of many congregations, institutes, and pious sodalities either of women with simple vows or of men who, according to their constitutions, do not take holy orders, go so far as to prescribe by their own authority the days on which their subjects have either to abstain from or to receive Holy Communion. In consequence, the Pope lays down the following rules to be observed by the superiors of these congregations.

128. "All prohibitions or permissions in connection with frequency of Communion may come only from the confessor, either ordinary or extraordinary. The superiors have no powers whatever to interfere in this matter, except in the case in which one of their subjects has been a cause of scandal in the community by committing a notoriously grevious sin after the last confession: in which case Communion may be forbidden until the delinquent approaches the tribunal of penance.

"The Pope advises all to do their utmost to insure a due disposition for Holy Communion, and wishes them to receive it on the days appointed by their rules, and whenever the confessor judges that anyone on account of his greater fervour or progress in virtue is worthy of more frequent Communion he may allow it. But

he who obtains this permission is bound to manifest the same to his superior. Superiors may put before the confessor their objections to such permission, but they must always acquiesce in his decision without the slightest hesitation."

129. This decree remains in force along with the Encyclical of Pius X. Confessors have to inculcate daily Communion in such institutes, and regulate their advice and permissions by the directions of the Pope.

130. The Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars declared on August 17, 1891, that all constitutions or rules prohibiting Holy Communion, except on certain fixed days, are to be considered of no effect whatever.

131. Finally, we have an answer from the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to the titular Bishop of Sozusa, Mgr. J. B. Cazet, S.J., Vicar Apostolic of Madagascar, who had submitted for examination the rules proposed by Father Lehmkuhl in his *Moral Theology*, on the matter of frequent Communion. The rules in question are these: "It is considered as a necessary condition for frequent Communion (by frequent I mean once or twice a week besides Sundays and feast days), first, a serious desire to avoid all deliberate venial sins so that such faults are of rare occurrence; secondly, an efficient attempt to root out inordinate affections even though not deliberate, and a desire to make

progress in virtue, in other words, marked advance along the Purgative Way, with attempts to progress in the Illuminative Way."

"Daily Communion may only be permitted to those persons who have not only fought but for the most part overcome their inordinate affections and earnestly aspire to Christian perfection, adjusting their lives to the examples of patience, humility, and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, *i.e.*, who advance and burn with desire to proceed onwards in the Illuminative and Unitive Ways."[1]

132. The Congregation in its answer, dated May 25, 1892 said: "On careful examination of the scheme proposed by your Lordship, we declare that the rules in question, except the words *not deliberate*, which are perhaps too exacting, may on the whole be approved, not as absolute law, but rather as directions which may be given to confessors."[2]

(*d*) *Twentieth Century.*

133. In conformity with what the Sacred Congregation of the Council declared on August 4, 1888, the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars has established in article 151 of the directions to be followed when approving institutes with simple vows, that any rules

[1] *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 2, *n.* 156.

[2] Lehmk., *Theol. Mor.*, ed. 9, vol. 2, p. 113.

appointing certain days on which the members of those congregations have to receive Holy Communion are not to be considered as a refusal to allow them to approach the Holy Table on other days also.[1]

VII

CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

134. All abuses connected with the reception of the Holy Eucharist were removed by the decrees already mentioned. However, authors were yet divided, some maintaining that daily Communion ought to be recommended to all those who are in a state of grace, and have a right intention, and many requiring besides these other dispositions for frequent access to the Holy Table.

135. The greater number of moralists defended the latter view, following with slight variations the rules laid down by St Alphonsus.

136. A glance at the following list will show us what a change has been introduced in the current ideas of theologians by the Encyclical of Pius X. :—

Gury, *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 2, No. 338; Ball, *Pal. opus morale*, vol. 4, Nos. 904, 905; Gasparri, *De Euch.*, No. 1, 137, 1, 174; Lehmk., vol. 2, No. 156; Marc., *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 2, Nos. 1, 579,

[1] *Acta Sanctæ Sedis*, vol. 21, p. 505.

1, 580; Rosset, *De Euch.*, No. 961; Lahousse, *De Sacr.*, No. 198-199; Aertnys, *Theol. Mor.*, lib. 6, No. 94; Génicot, *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 2, No. 159; Haine, *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 3, p. 82, q. 70; Müller, *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 3, § 100; Noldin, *De Sacr.*, No. 159; Alsina, *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 2, No. 502; Scavini-Del Vecchio, *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 2, Nos. 537, 538; Berardi, *Praxis*, vol. 3, No. 971; Sabetti, *Theol. Mor.*, No. 701; Van der Velden, vol. 2, p. 1, No. 139; Depeder, *Ench. Th. Pastoralis*, No. 596; *Instructio Pastoralis. Eystetten*, No. 284; Reuter-Müllendorff, *Neo Confessarius*, No. 216.

Likewise the answer given by the Sacred Congregation for the propagation of the faith quoted above, No. 132, seems to favour the opinion of these authors.

137. Frassinetti[1] on the contrary defended the opposite opinion in a learned discussion which was refuted by Génicot, Noldin, and Berardi, who went so far as to say that his doctrine was erroneous.

A book entitled *Daily Communion recommended to all those who are in a state of grace and derive profit from it*, was written by F. Francis Butina, S.J. (†1899). This pamphlet, in which the doctrine afterwards taught by Pius X. is enunciated, was not printed during the author's lifetime, but we hope to see it published before long.

[1] *Th. Mor.*, dissert. x., vol. 2, p. 46, Madrid, 1889.

Mons. de Segur also in his little book *La très-sainte communion* seems to be in favour of daily Communion, although from what he says at the end of his work we may infer that he did not abandon altogether the contrary opinion. "What conclusion then, dear reader, is to be drawn from this little treatise? Are you in future to go to Communion every day? To give such advice indiscriminately to all kinds of persons would be highly imprudent, and following the mind of the Church I do not advise you to communicate every day, unless you are living and intend to live entirely for God."[1]

138. The learned Cardinal Gennari, in his book *Sulla Comunione Frequente*, studied the probability of both opinions and, although he inclined in favour of daily Communion, did not depart altogether from the opinion which was common at the time.[2] We ourselves followed the rules laid down by the Cardinal in the second edition of our *Moral Theology*,[3] tempering at the same time those given by St Alphonsus without rejecting them altogether.

VIII

THE DISCIPLINARY PART OF PIUS X.'S DECREE

139. Such was the state of the controversy when Pius X. published the decree on which

[1] Paris, 1874, p. 68. [2] Napoli, 1900, p. 26.
[3] Gury-Ferreres, vol. 2, *n.* 344.

we are commenting. He settles for ever the question, and gives a clear solution to the difficulties in accordance with the most solid principles of theology.

140. It is true, as we have already said, that the greater number of moralists held a different view on the matter, but on the other hand they always differed from each other when laying down rules to be followed in exhorting the faithful to frequent Communion. Nor do they give convincing reasons why certain persons should be allowed to communicate every month and others every week or more frequently. Consequently doubts and perplexities arose, and confessors could not agree in their advice to penitents.

141. The prescriptions of Pius X. are so clear and definite that they do not leave room for doubt as to what is to be recommended to the faithful in the matter of frequent Communion.

142. Perhaps some priests are afraid of their work in the confessional being increased if daily Communion becomes a custom among their penitents.

143. But we must remember that daily Communion does not require daily or weekly, or even monthly confession.

144. So it has been declared in the following decree :—

Decree on the confession of daily communicants.[1]

His Holiness Pope Pius X. most earnestly desires that the praiseworthy custom, so very acceptable to God, by which the faithful, in a state of grace and with a right intention, approach daily to Holy Communion, may become more general and may lead to more virtuous lives. For which reason, graciously and gladly receiving the petitions of many persons addressed to him through the most eminent Cardinal Casimir Gennari, he has justly determined to grant a special favour to all those who follow or desire to follow the practice aforesaid.

Pope Clement XIII., of happy memory, by a decree of this Sacred Congregation of the 9th day of December, 1763, granted to all the faithful, "who, striving to purify their souls by frequent confession of their sins, were accustomed, unless they were legitimately hindered, to approach the Sacrament of Penance at least once a week, and were not conscious of having committed any mortal sin since their last confession, the privilege of gaining all indulgences whatsoever, without the actual confession which otherwise would be necessary for gaining them: this concession, however, being in no wise applicable to the indulgences of a jubilee, whether ordinary or extraordinary,

[1] The translation of this decree is reproduced by kind permission of the editor of the *Tablet*.

or to other indulgences granted in like manner; for which, besides the other works enjoined, sacramental confession must be made within the time prescribed." Now, however, to all the faithful, who, being in a state of grace and having a right and devout intention, are accustomed daily to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, even if they once or twice in a week omit their daily Communion, our Most Holy Father Pope Pius X., grants that they may avail themselves of the above-mentioned Indult of Clement XIII., of happy memory, without the weekly confession which in other circumstances is still of obligation for rightly gaining the indulgences that occur during the week. His Holiness, moreover, has graciously declared that this privilege will hold good in future times. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, the 14th day of February, 1906,

A. Card. Tripepi, *Prefect.*

✠ D. Panici,

Archbishop of Laodicea, Secretary.

The present rescript has been shown at the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences and Holy Relics. In testimony whereof, etc.

Given at Rome, at the aforesaid Secretariate, the 16th day of February, 1906.

Joseph M. Canon Coselli,

Substitute.

145. It is advisable, however, that those who approach daily the Holy Table should go to confession once or twice a week.

146. Confessors on their part must recommend those of their penitents who are habitually in a state of grace to be short in their confessions. They need only mention two or three venial faults and one sin of their past life if they want to make sure of the validity of the Sacrament. Moreover, confessors are to be cautioned not to keep their penitents, chiefly women, for a long time; so their work will be more profitable and those who wait for their turn to approach the Sacred Tribunal will not waste their time.

IX

COMMUNION ON HOLY SATURDAY

147. The desire expressed by the Pope in the present decree suggests to us the following question. Is it lawful to receive Holy Communion on Holy Saturday?

148. We are confronted with many difficulties in the matter, and as we remarked above in No. 116, we must bear in mind the changes which ecclesiastical discipline undergoes at different times and in different countries, in order to give a satisfactory answer.

149. Those changes explain also the diverg-

ences between the authors which can be made to agree by applying the well-known saying: *Distingue tempora et concordabis jura.*

(*a*) *Historical notes.*

150. We will confine ourselves here to an explanation of those facts which are in more immediate connection with the subject before us. We must remember in addition to what has been said in No. 117 that formerly the Eucharist was distributed almost exclusively during Mass.[1]

151. And even now this seems to be the mind of the Church according to the Roman Ritual, wherein it is provided that since the prayers recited in Mass after Communion are meant not only for the priest but for all those who have communicated, the Eucharist is to be distributed to the people immediately after the Communion of the celebrating priest, unless there be a reasonable cause for doing so after Mass.[2]

152. Nevertheless, it is now permitted to give Holy Communion not only before and after Mass, but even when the Holy Sacrifice is not offered, if there is a sufficient reason to justify it, provided it is done during the hours within which Mass may lawfully be celebrated.[3]

153. It was an old custom in France for the faithful to receive Holy Communion at the foot

[1] Many, *loc. cit.*, *nn.* 144, 168. [2] Tit. 4, c. 2, *n.* 10.
[3] S. C. of Rites, June 11, 1904.

of the altar. The second Council of Tours in its fourth canon prescribes:

Ad orandum et communicandum laicis et feminis sicut mos est, pateant Sancta Sanctorum.[1]	Let laymen and women approach the Holy of Holies, according to the custom to communicate and pray.

In Spain Communion was given in the following order:

Eo videlicet ordine ut sacerdos et levitae ante altare communicent; in choro, clerus; extra chorum, populus.[2]	Priests and deacons at the foot of the altar, clergy in the choir, laymen outside the choir.

154. It was customary for the men to receive the Sacred Host in their bare hands, and to communicate themselves by conveying it to the mouth. Women, on the contrary, had their hands covered for that purpose with a linen cloth, which some authors believe to be the so-called *dominical.* In this connection St Cæsarius says, in a sermon formerly attributed to St Augustin:

Omnes viri quando ad altare accessuri sunt, lavant manus suas; et omnes mulieres nitida exhibent linteamina ubi corpus Christi accipiant.[3]	All men when approaching the altar wash their hands, and all the women bear a clean cloth in which they receive the body of Christ.

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[1] Mansi, vol. 9 col. 793. Duchesne, *Origines du culte Chrétien*, p. 224 (Paris 1903).

[2] *Fourth Council of Toledo*, c. 18; Héfele, vol. 3, p. 621; Mansi, vol. 10, col. 624; *Aguirre Collectio Max. Concil.*, vol. 3, p. 370; Devoti, vol. 2., *n.* 51, *n.* 3, p. 66.

[3] Migne, P. L., vol. 39, col. 2168; Pons, S. J., *De antiquitatibus Jur. can.*, lib. 3, tit. 23.

155. About the year 578, the Council of Auxerre decreed in its 36th canon :

Non licet mulieri nuda manu Eucharistiam accipere.[1]	It is not lawful for a woman to receive the Eucharist in her bare hand.

And in canon 37 it says :

Non licet mulieri manum suam ad pallam dominicam mittere.	A woman is not permitted to touch the altar-cloth with her hand.

And, finally, canon 43 prescribes :

Ut unaquaeque mulier quando communicat dominicalem suum habeat ; quod si qua non habuerit, usque in alium diem dominicum non communicet.	A woman when communicating must wear her *dominical*, and if she has none let her defer Communion till the following Sunday.

156. Other authors, on the contrary, think that the *dominical* was a kind of veil or *mantilla* which women wore on their heads when receiving Holy Communion, and that it had no connection with the cloth with which they covered their hands.

157. The Council of Auxerre seems to confirm this view, for after referring to the cloth for the hands in canon 37, it goes on in canon 43 to allude to the *dominical* as if it were something quite distinct. Ducange[2] quotes in proof of this opinion the following passage taken from the

[1] Duchesne, *Origines du culte Chrétien*, p. 224 ; Mansi, vol. 9, col. 915.

[2] Ducange, *Glossarium*, v.

end of the *Vetus Penitentiale MS.*, which shows the meaning of the canons we have referred to:

Si mulier communicans dominicale suum super caput suum non habuerit, usque ad alium diem dominicum non communicet.[1]

If any woman when coming to Communion does not wear the *dominical* on her head, she must not communicate till the following Sunday.

Devoti is of the same opinion.

158. The Quinisext Council ordains in canon 101 that the Consecrated Bread is to be received in the hands placed in the form of a cross, and disapproves of the custom of receiving the body of Christ in golden vessels, as though inanimate matter were more worthy than the hands of man who is the image of God.[2]

159. The text of the canon runs as follows:—

Quare si quis immaculati corporis in Synaxis tempore esse particeps voluerit et offere se ad communionem, manus in crucis formam figurans sic accedat et gratiae communionem accipiat. Eos qui ex auro, vel ex alia materia quaedam loco manus receptacula efficiunt, ad divini muneris susceptionem, et per ipsa immaculatam communionem

Wherefore if anyone wishes to partake of the immaculate body of Christ, and to present himself as a communicant, placing his hands in the form of a cross, let him so approach and receive the Communion of grace. For those who in place of their hands make receptacles of gold or of some other substance in which they receive the divine gift, and by

[1] Devoti, vol. 2, *n.* 51 (p. 67, Matriti, 1853).

[2] Héfele, 4, p. 224; Mansi, vol. 11, col 986. Pitra, *Juris ecclesiastici græcorum notitia et documenta*, vol. 2, p. 71, Romæ, 1868.

recipiunt minime admittimus, ut qui inanimatam subjectamque materiam Dei imagini preferant. Si quis autem deprehensus fuerit immaculatam communionem iis impertiens qui hujusmodi receptacula afferunt, et ipse segregetur, et is qui affert.

means of the same receive Christ's spotless body, we in no wise admit, since they prefer to the image of God an inanimate and inert substance. And should anyone be convicted of bestowing Holy Communion on those who bring such receptacles, let them be excommunicated, both him who gives the Communion and him who brings the vessel.

160. St Cyril of Jerusalem gives us a minute description of the ceremonies formerly observed at the reception of the Eucharist:

Adiens igitur, ne expansis manuum volis, neque disjunctis digitis accede; sed sinistram velut thronum subjiciens dexteræ utpote Regem suscepturæ et concava manu suscipe corpus Christi respondens: Amen. Postquam autem caute oculos tuos sancti corporis contactu sanctificaveris, illud percipe advigilans ne quid ex eo tibi depereat.[1]

You must not approach with the palms of your hands extended nor with the fingers separated when going (to communicate), but the right hand must rest on the left as on a throne since it is about to receive your king, and receive the body of Christ in the hollow of your hand, saying: Amen. And, after having reverently sanctified your eyes by contact with the Holy Body, receive it, having care that no particle of it is lost.

161. According to a council held in Rome about the year 650, the Holy Host is not to

[1] Migne, P. G., vol. 33, col. 1126.

be put in the hands of laymen, but into their mouths.[1]

162. The Greeks as a rule have only one altar in each church, at which no more than one Mass is celebrated on the same day, and there are even traces of this discipline having been in force in the West at certain times.[2]

163. It may be that this custom explains the desire of the Council of Trent, when the faithful are recommended to communicate whenever they attend the Holy Sacrifice, because in that case there would be only one Communion each day and that at the only Mass.

(*b*) *The Existing Discipline*

164. Formerly, the faithful as well as the priest communicated on Good Friday with hosts consecrated the day before.[3] The *Missale Romanum vetus* expressly states that after the adoration of the cross all present at the Mass of the Presanctified received Holy Communion.[4] In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Juan de Vega and other authors maintained this practice to be lawful in spite of the rubrics of the Missal and the custom observed in Rome which were

[1] Héfele, *loc. cit.*, p. 638; Mansi, vol. 10, col. 1199, 1200; Devoti, *loc. cit.*, No. 51, *n.* 6.

[2] Tomassini, *Vetus et nova Ecclesiæ disciplina*, p. 1, lib. 2, c. 21, *n.* 7; Pons., *loc. cit.*, p. 211.

[3] Many, *loc. cit.*, *n.* 166; *Analecta*, serie 8, col. 837.

[4] Asseman, *Codex liturgicus*, lib. 4, p. 54, Romæ, 1761.

in conflict with their views. Moreover, we have several decisions from the sacred congregations, which leave no room for doubt on the matter. In the year 1622, when Good Friday fell on the Feast of the Annunciation, the religious in charge of the House of Loreto asked the S. C. of Rites if the faithful were obliged to assist at the Mass of the Presanctified, and if they might receive Holy Communion on that day. The answer to the first question was in the negative. With regard to the second the Congregation said that according to the universal custom of the Church, Holy Communion on Good Friday could only be administered to the sick.[1] We may, however, say in favour of those who maintained the contrary opinion after the date of this document, that that answer was not published at the time, and we may probably presume that they were ignorant of its existence.

165. Likewise, the decision agreed upon in the assemblies held on February 5 and September 24, 1678, to which we have referred, were given in the same sense. "Communion on Good Friday is expressly forbidden."[2] "With regard to the reception of the Eucharist on Good Friday, the bishops are to take care that the rubrics of the Missal and the custom of the Roman Church be observed."[3] This clause was inserted in the decree, "Cum ad aures."

[1] *Analecta*, serie 8, col. 165. [2] *Ibid.*, serie 8, col. 820.
[3] *Ibid.*, serie 8, col. 824.

166. After the promulgation of the decree, "Cum ad aures," the Archbishop of Toledo, Card. Portocarrero, published an order to the effect that superiors of religious orders were not allowed to permit the administration of the Eucharist on Good Friday. The Benedictines in Spain, who had for many years observed the contrary custom, appealed to the S. C. of the Council, asking permission to continue the practice already established in their churches. They entrusted the vindication of their claims to the advocate Ansaldo de Ansaldis, who wrote a brilliant and very learned discourse on behalf of the Benedictines. It was later on inserted in the *Analecta Juris Pontificii*.[1] In the first paragraph of the Memorial the petition is expressed in the following terms:—

"Most Eminent and Rev. Lord.

"An edict has been issued by His Grace the Most Rev. Lord Archbishop of Toledo ordering all superiors of regulars to forbid in their churches the administration of the Holy Eucharist on Good Friday. Such a measure is said to have been urged on the bishops by the S. C. of the Council, which when called upon to decide on this subject by our most Holy Father, determined that the rite in question was an abuse not to be tolerated. But this law could be tempered or modified in such a way as to allow that the practice, which for many years

[1] Serie 8, col. 842.

has been in vogue in all the churches of Benedictines in Spain, should be continued."

The Congregation, however, in an answer given on March 22, 1681, insisted on its prohibition, refusing to grant any dispensation to the contrary. This is the discipline that obtains to-day.

167. It is more difficult to settle the question as to the lawfulness of communicating on Holy Saturday. Formerly, neither celebration of Mass nor administration of the Eucharist was allowed on that day, which was considered *non-liturgical*.[1] Later on, the Mass of the Resurrection, which used to be celebrated on the Sunday at sunrise, was transferred first to the evening and subsequently to the morning of the Saturday; and as the prayers at the end of the Mass seem to imply that the faithful have received Holy Communion, hence difficulties in the matter arise.[2]

168. Unfortunately, the decisions from the sacred congregations point to contrary conclusions, and on the other hand, neither theologians nor the practice of the Church give us sufficient arguments to settle the question satisfactorily.[3]

[1] *Decr. Gratiani*, p. 3, dist. 3, c. 13; *Sabatho de Consecrat; Razón y Fe*, vol. 14, p. 100.

[2] In the book *Ordines* quoted by Duchesne, p. 471, we find: "Et communicat omnis populus, seu et infantes qui in ipsa nocte baptizati sunt"; Asseman, *Codex liturgicus*, lib. 4, p. 58.

[3] Benedict XIV., *de Sacrif. Missæ*, c. 18, *n.* 14.

169. Some authors maintained the lawfulness of the reception of Holy Communion during the Mass, on the grounds that the answer given by the S. C. of Rites on March 22, 1806, permits it.[1]

170. Others on the contrary[2] are of the opinion that it may be allowed only in those churches where such a custom is already established, and adduce in favour of their views that this was the case with the parish church of Canoscio (Italy), to which the answer alluded to was addressed. A fact which was mentioned to the Congregation when the case was submitted to it for decision. Besides that, there is another answer from the same congregation, given on September 22, 1837, which favours this opinion.

"The use of the plural in the prayers, recited before and after Communion in the Mass of Holy Saturday, suggests the following question. Is it lawful to adminster the Holy Eucharist to the faithful, and if so, may there be used particles consecrated in the same Mass? The answer was in the negative, unless a contrary custom justified it."[3]

[1] *D. Anth.*, *n.* 2561 ; Gury-Ferreres, vol. 2, *n.* 297 ; Mocchengiani, *Jurispr. Eccl*, vol. 2, *n.* 941 ; Solans, *Man. liturgicum*, vol. 2, *n.* 434 ; Bucceroni, *Th. Mor.*, vol. 2, *n.* 537 ; Génicot, *Th. Mor.*, vol. 2, *n.* 187 ; Noldin, *De Sacr.*, *n.* 202 ; In *n.* 128, he seems to be in favour of the contrary opinion.

[2] Gasparri, *De Euch.*, *n.* 1090 ; Wernz., *Jus Decret.*, III., *n.* 742 ; Marc., *Th. Mor.*, *n.* 540 ; Depeder, *Th. Past.*, 559.

[3] In Mutinem, 22 Sep. 1837, *n.* 4815, Coll. Gardellini.

171. This doctrine was confirmed by the provincial council of Valladolid in the year 1887,[1] which declared that Holy Communion on Holy Saturday could only be administered before or after Mass in those churches where such a custom was observed.

172. Many authors, as Deshayes,[2] Marc, Noldin, Bucceroni, Génicot, D'Annibale,[3] Constantini,[4] and Depeder, admit that Communion may be given after Mass ; and all of them, except Deshayes and Marc, allow the distribution of the Eucharist after the *Gloria* is sung in churches where custom has sanctioned it. We have seen already that some decisions from the S. C. of Rites are in agreement with this view.

173. Finally, Many says that there is no prohibition whatever against receiving Communion on Holy Saturday, and in confirmation of his view he adduces the fact that the faithful of Paris communicate every year during the Mass[5] of that day.

174. It is remarkable that the only decree connected with the reception of the Eucharist

[1] Part 3, tit. 4, *n.* 13.
[2] *Memento Jur. can.*, *n.* 1288.
[3] *Summula*, v. iii., No. 407, *n.* 5.
[4] *Theol. Mor.*, vol. 3, *n.* 702.
[5] *De Missa*, *n.* 167.

on Holy Saturday which appears in the new authentic collection is the one dated March 22, 1806,[1] and this declares that such a practice is permitted. It may be said that the answer was addressed to a church where that custom was established, but on the other hand there are sufficient grounds to suppose that the congregation did not take this fact into consideration when giving its official decision, which is to the following effect :—

"Is it lawful to administer the Holy Eucharist to the faithful during the High Mass on Holy Saturday? and if so, do the communicants fulfil their Easter duties by receiving it? The answer to both questions is in the affirmative."

175. The argument derived from the omission of the other decrees becomes stronger when we pay attention to the fact that the decree dated September 22, 1837, which we mentioned above, is inserted in the collection,[2] but the part dealing with Holy Communion on Holy Saturday has been omitted.

176. Finally, in the house of St Joseph de Roquetas, near Tortosa, the Fathers of the Society of Jesus give a yearly retreat to gentle-

[1] Noldin alludes to the decree issued on July 28, 1882, *D. auth.*, *n.* 2616, but nothing about Communion on Holy Saturday is mentioned there.

[2] *n.* 2769.

men during Holy Week. On Holy Saturday, which is the last day of the retreat, there are no services in the chapel of the house, and the Fathers consulted the Holy Office if they might give Holy Communion to those gentlemen early in the morning on Holy Saturday. The answer was that it could be done without scruple.

177. The following conclusions may be drawn from the doctrine here set forth :—

First. Holy Communion on Holy Saturday may be lawfully administered where an established custom authorizes it.

Second. Where this practice has not been introduced, the distribution of the Eucharist is permitted on that day if a sufficient reason justifies it.

Third. In other cases it is advisable to abstain from giving Communion on Holy Saturday till a fresh decision from Rome settles the question.

X

VENIAL SINS AND THEIR RELATION TO FREQUENT COMMUNION : THE ADVICE OF THE CONFESSOR

178. Another question of long standing is settled for ever by the Encyclical of Pius X., namely, how far frequent Communion is advisable

for those who are in the habit of committing venial sins.

179. It is clear from the context of the decree that venial sins, whether deliberate or indeliberate, even when the soul has become attached to them, do not impede frequent or daily Communion, so that if anyone approaches the Holy Table in this condition, far from committing a sin he performs a meritorious act, and it is more praiseworthy to receive than to abstain from Communion owing to an exaggerated feeling of awe.

180. It is desirable that all Christians should endeavour to avoid even the smallest faults, but, if weakness and frailty causes them to yield at times to their inordinate affections, let them not stay away from Holy Communion on that account, since the daily reception of Christ's body will be the best means to overcome temptations and to avoid sin.

181. Although anyone who is not conscious of mortal sin and has a right intention may communicate every day without the advice of his confessor, still it is prudent, in order to foster humility and a spirit of submission, to be always guided by a confessor's opinion, improperly spoken of as permission.

182. The confessor on his part when recommending daily Communion need only insist that his penitents be in a state of grace and have a

right intention, so long as this practice does not interfere with the fulfilment of their duties.

183. A very slight knowledge of the history of *Moral Theology* will enable us to see that these rules imply a total departure from the doctrines which have been maintained by the greater number of authors.[1]

XI

FREQUENT COMMUNION FOR CHILDREN

184. One of the first questions submitted to the Sacred Congregation of the Council with respect to the Encyclical on which we are commenting, deals with frequent Communion in the case of children. May frequent or daily reception of the Holy Eucharist be permitted to all children who have made their first Communion, or only to those who are at least over fourteen? This difficulty is suggested to us by two considerations.

185. First, fear lest the Blessed Sacrament should suffer disrespect on the part of those little ones, considering the giddiness and fickleness of their immature minds. So much so that in some countries, children who have made their first Communion are not allowed to approach

[1] St Alphonsus, *loc. cit.;* Benedict XIV., *loc. cit.;* Berardi, *Praxis Confessar.*, vol. 3, *n.* 969.

the Holy Table again until after the lapse of a year.

186. Secondly, the word *ephebeus*, used in the decree in connection with the subject seems to imply only those who have reached the age of puberty, viz., boys over fourteen and girls over twelve.

187. But on the other hand, the usual meaning of the word *ephebeus*, which is often applied to establishments where young people of all ages are trained, as well as the context of the Encyclical, which tends to promote daily Communion in every possible way, and declares that the only dispositions required are absence of mortal sin and a right intention, made it clear that the Pope's intention was by no means to hinder from frequent reception of the Eucharist any children who have already tasted of the sweetness of this heavenly bread.

188. This desire of the Holy Father appears more justifiable when we consider that the innocence and sincerity peculiar to tender years are specially dear to our Lord, while young souls are exposed to more dangerous attacks on the part of enemies who endeavour to strip them of the raiment of baptismal purity. We need hardly say that those dangers have assumed alarming proportions at the present time when deadly poison is instilled into the hearts of children by means of public immorality, free schools, and the like.

189. It is therefore desirable and in conformity with the wishes of Christ and His Church, that young people be often strengthened with this food of life, that they may be fortified to encounter the attacks of their enemies, and saved from sinking beneath the first storm of their passions.

190. These are the views of the Sacred Congregation of the Council which, having been asked if, when daily Communion is recommended to Catholic youth, children who have already made their first Communion are also understood, answered, "According to the first article of the decree, frequency of Communion is to be recommended even to children, once they have been permitted in conformity with the instruction of the Catechism of the Council of Trent to approach the Holy Table, and they are not to be prevented from frequently partaking of the Holy Eucharist. But on the contrary they are to be encouraged to do so, and all contrary practices are condemned" (September 15, 1906).

191. So that once again the Gospel story has been retold. "They brought to him little children, that he might touch them. And the disciples thinking it unbecoming to the divine Majesty to see the Master surrounded by these noisy and inconsiderate little ones, rebuked them that brought them. But our divine Saviour who 'feedeth among the lilies' of innocence and purity was much displeased, and said to them:

'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. . . .' And embracing them and laying his hands upon them, he blessed them."

192. Nothing has been settled so far, respecting the age at which children have to make their first Communion. We refer in this matter to our pamphlet—"The teaching of the Catechism prescribed by Pius X.," *n.* 92. Perhaps we are correct in saying that His Holiness will issue some directions on this point, recommending that children who have reached the age of reason should be allowed to approach the Holy Table.

XII

THE COMMUNION OF THE SICK: A REMARKABLE PRIVILEGE

193. Some difficulties are suggested in connection with the administration of the Eucharist to the sick; and first of all we have to make it clear how often Holy Communion may be given to those who, although unable to go to church, can observe their fast till the hour of Communion.

194. Two cases may be considered in this question. The first applies to religious and other persons who live in seminaries, colleges, hospitals, or houses where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, so that the Eucharist can be

easily brought to the invalid's room. Such persons may receive Holy Communion every day; and we must advise them to do so, provided fitting dispositions are not wanting in them.

195. This is to be also understood of enclosed nuns when the chaplain is allowed without special permission to enter into the convent every day in order to impart the Holy Eucharist to sick nuns, if they ask for it and cannot walk to the chapel.[1]

196. For obvious reasons we can infer that the same course may be followed in the case of those who enjoy the privilege of a private oratory, even when they are not permitted to reserve the Blessed Sacrament. In which case the priest who celebrates Mass may consecrate a host and administer it to the sick after Mass, and if their rooms are so close to the oratory that the persons within can hear the words of the Mass, or the priest can enter into them without losing sight of the altar, then Holy Communion may be given during the Mass.[2]

197. According to a recent decree dated May 8, 1907, permission to administer the Eucharist to all those who are present at the Holy Sacrafice, though they do not fulfil the ecclesiastical precept by doing so, has become a part of the

[1] Gury-Ferreres, *Th. Mor.*, vol. 2, *n.* 983 bis, third edition.
[2] *D. auth.*, *nn.* 3099, 2672, 3322.

privilege of a private oratory; and consequently Communion may always be taken to sick persons in the house when they cannot go to the oratory.

The text of the decree is to the following effect:—

"Our most Holy Father and Lord Pius X., in an audience granted to the Most Eminent and Rev. Lord Cardinal Cretoni, prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, on May 8, 1907, has graciously determined and declared that the faculty to administer Holy Communion to all the faithful present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is understood to be included in the privileges of a private oratory, without prejudice however to parochial rights. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

"From the Secretariate of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, May 8, 1907.

"D. PANICI,

"*Archbishop of Laodicea, Secretary.*"

198. Our second point concerns the rest of the faithful. It cannot be expected that the priest should be called upon to carry the Blessed Sacrament to their private houses every day, especially when such persons are suffering from a chronic disease, but we might suggest to those who have the cure of souls that it would be praiseworthy to administer Holy Communion once a month at least to the sick in their districts, who are desirous of being fortified with the bread of life.

199. Next comes the case of those who are suffering from a more or less permanent malady, and who, though not in imminent danger of death, are not able to observe the usual fast before Communion.

200. The Pope has very often granted to such persons at their request permission to take some sort of liquid food as beef-tea or milk before Communion, so that their souls might be strengthened with spiritual nourishment without detriment to their bodily health.[1] But as it was not an easy thing in the majority of cases to present such a petition to the Holy See, some prominent ecclesiastical authorities, from whom we received information on the subject, called the attention of the Holy Father to the desire of the faithful expressed in the reviews *Acta Sanctæ Sedis* and *Il Monitore*, and asked for a general permission to the effect that all sick persons who, according to the opinion of their confessor, cannot observe the fast before Communion, should be permitted to take some sort of liquid food, and receive afterwards the Holy Eucharist twice a week if living in religious houses, and twice a month in other cases. Consequently the Sacred Congregation of the Council on being consulted as to frequency of Communion in the case of children, was requested to answer the following question :—"Might a privilege be granted in favour of those who, suffering from a long illness, are

[1] Gury-Ferreres, vol. 2, *n.* 334.

unable to observe the usual fast in its integrity, so that they should not be for a long period deprived of the Eucharistic bread?" The answer was: *Juxta mentem. Facto verbo cum SSmo.*

201. Later, on December 7, 1906, the following decree was issued:—

"After the publication of the decree on frequent and daily Communion, dated December 20, 1905, requests have been made, if it was possible, to give a decision in favour of those who, suffering from long illness and being unable to keep the usual fast in its integrity, wish sometimes to be strengthened with the Eucharistic bread. For this reason petitions have been addressed to our most Holy Father and Lord Pius X., who on mature consideration, and after having consulted the Sacred Congregation of the Council, graciously granted that all sick persons who have been confined to their beds for one month, and of whose early recovery there is no probable hope, should be allowed, guided by the advice of their confessor, to receive the Holy Eucharist once or twice a week, when they live in pious houses where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, or if they enjoy the privilege of having Mass celebrated in a private oratory, and once or twice a month in other cases. And that they may do so, even when they have previously taken some sort of liquid food, provided the rules prescribed by the Roman Ritual and the Sacred Congregation of Rites are observed.

"The present decree will hold good. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

"Dated at Rome, December 7, 1906.

"✠ VINCENT,

"*Cardinal Archbishop of Palestrina, Prefect.*"

202. Thus the necessary conditions required to benefit by the privilege granted in the above decree, are: First, that the illness shall have lasted already for a month and there is no prospect of the early recovery of the invalid. For the words *a mense decumberent* would seem to imply that those persons only are spoken of who have been confined to their beds for a month. We think it, however, probable that these words are not to be too literally understood, but may be extended so far as to include those who are suffering from an illness which has kept them indoors, and who are incapable of keeping the usual fast before Communion.[1] It is also probable that any sick person who

[1] This opinion, which we proposed in *Razón y Fe* for February 1907, has been subsequently confirmed by the following decree.

Decree concerning the sick who receive Holy Communion without fasting:—March 6, 1907. "The following question has been proposed to the Sacred Congregation. By the words, sick persons, *qui a mense decumberent*, and who may consequently receive Holy Communion without fasting, are those only understood who are actually confined to their beds, or are those also comprehended who, though suffering from a serious illness and unable to fast according to their doctor's opinion, yet find it impossible to remain in their bed, or are allowed to leave it for some hours?" The Sacred Congregation

has been in bed for a month is entitled to the privilege in question although the illness, serious in its development, was not so from the beginning. Secondly, it is the confessor who has to determine if a sick person is in the condition for which the decree provides. The opinion of the doctor is not required, but the confessor may ask his advice and be guided by it.

Only liquid food is permitted, so that any kind of solid nourishment as lozenges, eggs, and the like is not allowed, although these substances may be given to the sick dissolved in wine or water.

N.B.—The decree makes reference to persons who are bedridden, or at least unable to go out of doors. Now we may propose the following case. If a patient who suffers from a chronic disease cannot abstain from food before Com-

answered on March 6, 1907, that they are comprehended. *Facto verbo cum SSmo. ad cautelam.*

On March 25, 1907. His Holiness having received the report of the hereinafter-mentioned secretary of the S. C. of the Council, graciously deigned to confirm and approve the decision of the Sacred Congregation, and ordered it to be published, anything to the contrary notwithstanding,

✠ VINCENT,
Card. Bishop of Palestrina, Prefect.
CAJETAN DE LAI,
Secretary.

We gave our opinion as probable, not as certain. The fact that the Sacred Congregation had recourse to the Pope in order to have its interpretation authentically approved, shows that the Congregation also thought it probable but not certain.

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munion but can go or be taken to church, is he allowed to receive the Holy Eucharist there after having taken beforehand some liquid food? It is difficult to give a solution to this case, especially if we consider that there is danger of scandal being given to the faithful when they see a person who has broken the fast prescribed by the Church approaching the Holy Table. We think, however, that a patient under these circumstances is entitled to share twice a week the privilege of the decree. We base our solution on the consideration that the Pope's wishes are that such persons should not be deprived for long of the benefit of Holy Communion, and if they can go to church they may be considered to be comprehended in the case of those who have an oratory at home.

The document we are discussing settles the long-standing controversy as to the lawfulness of administering the Holy Eucharist to the sick, when they are not in danger of death and yet cannot fast.

Suarez[1] and Many[2] held that it was never allowed without special permission from the Holy See. Elbel[3] would permit it sometimes in the year, and, although Suarez and Bonacina[4]

[1] *De Euch.*, disp. 68, sec. 5, *n.* 3; Pastoral instruction of Eischat, *n.* 55.

[2] Many, *De Missa*, *n.* 178.

[3] *Theol. Mor.*, part 8, *n.* 323.

[4] *De Euch.*, disp. 4, q. 6, punc. 2, *n.* 23. Ojetti, *Synopsis rerum mor.*, 2, p. 42.

are mentioned in favour of this view, Suarez teaches clearly the contrary opinion, and Bonacina does not discuss the question. Finally, D'Annibale[1] admitted that it was lawful to administer Holy Communion to the sick under those circumstances, not out of mere devotion, but only when there was a question of their fulfilling their Easter duties, which are a prescription of divine law. Berardi[2] agrees with this opinion though he requires the permission of the bishop.

XIII

FREQUENT COMMUNION IN RELIGIOUS HOUSES

203. The Holy Father prescribes that frequent and daily Communion is to be promoted, especially in religious orders and congregations, in ecclesiastical seminaries, and also in all Christian establishments of whatever kind for the training of youth.

204. It is obvious that such persons are more likely to have the due dispositions for frequent and daily Communion. But we may ask how and by whom this practice is to be promoted among them.

[1] *Sum. Theol. Mor.*, vol. 2, *n.* 202; Gasparri, *De Euch.*, *n.* 1129; Génicot, *Inst. Theol. Mor.*, vol. 2, *n.* 202; Noldin, *de Sacr.*, *n.* 157.

[2] *Praxis Confessar.*, vol. 3, *n.* 968.

205. In the first place preachers and confessors have to inculcate frequent and daily Communion both in their public exhortations to the community and in their private advice to penitents.

206. Secondly, the superiors may exhort their subjects to comply with the desires of the Pope, leaving always, of course, to the confessor the final decision in the matter, and may also order both confessors and preachers to insist upon the teaching of the Encyclical when addressing the members of their community.

207. The superiors likewise should facilitate the practice of daily Communion by arranging the general order of time and private occupations of individuals in such a way as not to interfere with the fulfilment of the prescriptions of the Holy Father.

208. They may not forbid any of their subjects to go to Holy Communion, except in the case in which a religious has committed a notoriously grievous sin, and this prohibition must hold only until the delinquent approaches the Sacred Tribunal of Penance.

209. The superioresses of religious congregations are entitled by the decree "Quem ad modum," which is still in force along with the present Encyclical, to forbid Holy Communion in this case; and we may conclude that a similar faculty is given to superiors of religious orders and rectors of ecclesiastical seminaries and colleges, if they are either religious or priests.

210. But they are not otherwise entitled to keep subjects from daily access to the Holy Table. The Pope allows and recommends daily Communion to all those who are in a state of grace and have a right intention, and therefore no superior may hinder his subjects from the fulfilment of the Pope's wishes.

211. It is true that His Holiness desires the faithful to be always guided by a confessor's advice on the matter, but the confessor himself is not allowed to keep from daily Communion anyone who has the dispositions required.

212. Again, superiors of religious orders, far from prohibiting their subjects from daily Communion, must strive to foster the desire for this daily bread in the minds of those who, being in a state of grace, can approach daily the Holy Table without neglecting their particular duties.

213. Nor properly speaking does the permission to receive daily Communion come from prelates or superiors. It has been already granted by the Holy Father.

214. Moreover, the confessor himself cannot, in the strict sense of the word, either *permit* or *forbid* daily Communion to his penitent. If such expressions as *permission* or *prohibition* are used in the decree "Quem ad modum," they are to be understood to mean advice or admonition.

215. It seems, however, that any religious

who with the advice of his confessor wishes to receive Holy Communion every day, or more frequently than his rules prescribe, has to inform his superior of his intentions, according to the 6th article of the decree "Quem ad modum," which probably applies to all religious orders and congregations.

216. In conformity with what has been prescribed by the same document, if a superior has any objection to his subjects receiving daily Holy Communion he may consult their confessor, though he must be ready to accept his decision and acquiesce in it without the slightest hesitation.

217. In practice these objections may only arise from the fact that his subjects neglect the discharge of their duties. But as we have already said, the superior has to see that the obligations imposed on his subjects do not hinder them from daily access to the Holy Table.

218. Finally, in the case of religious institutes in whose rules or constitutions Communion is assigned to certain fixed days, such regulations are to be regarded as *directive* not *preceptive*, and the appointed number of Communions should be considered as a minimum.

219. The decree "Sacra Tridentina Synodus" is to be read in community in the vernacular every year within the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi.

XIV

THE EUCHARISTIC LEAGUE OF PRIESTS

220. A pious association named "The Eucharistic League of Priests" has been instituted at Rome, in the Church of St Claudius, the property of the sodality of the most Blessed Sacrament. Its purpose is to promote daily and frequent Communion among the faithful, and it has been officially established by a decree of the Cardinal Vicar, dated July 27, 1906.

221. A few days later, namely, on August 10, His Holiness raised the said association to the rank of an archconfraternity, granting it faculties to aggregate to itself any other leagues founded for the same purpose, and to communicate to them all the privileges which the Holy See has conceded to the league at Rome.

222. These privileges are the following :—

(*a*) All priests belonging to the league are entitled to enjoy the concession of a privileged altar three times a week, if they have no right to it otherwise. Therefore, they may on these days apply a plenary indulgence to the souls of the departed for whom they celebrate Mass.[1]

[1] *Razón y Fe*, vol. 1, p. 562 ; Gury-Ferreres, *Th. Mor.*, vol. 2, *n.* 1060, bis.

(*b*) They are allowed to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice one hour after and before the time prescribed by the common ecclesiastical law, that is, one hour before sunrise and one hour after midday.

(*c*) They may distribute the Holy Eucharist to the faithful at any time from sunrise till sunset, although the rules of the Church allow it only during the hours at which Mass can be celebrated.

(*d*) A plenary indulgence in the usual form of the Church is conceded to the members of the league on the following days: Christmas Day, the Circumcision, the Epiphany, Easter Sunday, the Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, the Transfiguration, Corpus Christi, the Purification of our Lady, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Immaculate Conception, the feasts of St Peter and Paul, and the other Apostles,[1] and besides, on the feast of our Lady of the Snows and the Assumption. So it has been declared by the Holy Father in an audience given to Cardinal Gennari, on May 7, 1907.

(*e*) During the triduum which the league celebrates every year, the priests who belong to it may communicate a plenary indulgence to the faithful, after the general Communion, by blessing them

[1] S. C. of Rites, 1893; *D. auth.* 3810.

once with the sign of the Cross made with the Crucifix.

(*f*) They may also gain 300 days' indulgence for all charitable works done according to the intentions of the league.

(*g*) Finally, confessors enrolled in the league have faculties to communicate once a week a plenary indulgence to those of their penitents who receive the Holy Eucharist every day, or almost every day. Probably this indulgence may be gained only by visiting a church on the day appointed by the confessor, and saying some prayers for the intention of the Holy Father. Some difficulties arose in connection with this privilege, which are solved by the following decision :—

"Most Holy Father: The superior of the Eucharistic League of Priests prostrate at the feet of your Holiness humbly requests an answer to the following questions connected with the interpretation of the brief *Romanorum Pontificum*, dated July 30, 1906, which deals with the privileges of the league."

I. Priests, members of the league, are entitled by the said document to communicate once a week a plenary indulgence to those of their penitents who receive Holy Communion every day, or almost every day. Is it necessary to communicate this indulgence every week, or may it be done once for several weeks?

II. Likewise, a plenary indulgence is granted every year on the feasts of the principal mysteries of the Faith, and on the feasts of Our Lady and the Holy Apostles. Are these feasts to be taken from the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, dated August 23, 1893, *n.* 3810, or from the decree of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences, dated September 18, 1862, *n.* 392?

III. Are these indulgences, both plenary and partial applicable, to the souls of the departed?

On May 7, 1907, His Holiness, after having considered the matter laid before him, gave the following answer to the question proposed above.

Ad. I. *Negative ad primam partem, affirmative ad secundam*—Ad. II. *In casu exposito, juxta decretum S. Rituum Congregationis datum* 22, *Augusti* 1893—Ad. III. *Affirmative. In quorum fidem, etc. Casimirus Card. Gennari.*

223. All priests who wish to promote the practice of daily Communion may join the league, and they must strive by every means in their power, namely by their sermons and by their prayers, and by propagating among the faithful pamphlets on the excellence of the Holy Eucharist, to increase more and more the number of daily communicants.

224. A monthly review published by Fathers of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament is the organ of the league.

225. All those who wish to become members of the sodality may apply to its director: "Direttore generale della Lega Sacerdotale Eucaristica, Chiesa di S. Claudio, Roma."

226. The league can be established everywhere, with the consent of course of the bishop, but such branch sodalities are to be aggregated to the archconfraternity in order to share the indulgences and privileges above mentioned.

227. *Il Monitore* for October 1906 published an instruction to the members of the league, giving them directions to work for the ends of the association. A copy of this document is forwarded to all those who are willing to join the sodality.

228. In it they are admonished to explain to the people both in their writings and in their sermons the excellence of the Holy Eucharist and the fruits which can be derived from its daily reception, and to remove all obstacles to such a laudable practice, chiefly those which may arise from the writings of antiquated authors, whose opinions are to be tempered according to the latest decisions of the Holy See.

229. Parish priests are desired to promote among their flocks the custom of daily attending the Holy Sacrifice as the most efficient means of attracting them to frequent Communion, taking care that for this purpose Mass is celebrated in

their churches at an hour suitable for the majority.

230. It is likewise recommended to have a yearly retreat of three days during which preachers should deal with such subjects as the evil of mortal sin, the mercy of God, the Sacrament of Penance, and the Holy Eucharist.

231. This triduum should end on the eve of a feast day or day of obligation, so that a general Communion may be held on the following day, and the people are to be exhorted to be faithful for the future in approaching the Holy Table.

232. At the evening service after the sermon and before Benediction, the prayer for the propagation of daily Communion, a copy of which will be given further on, is to be said. This prayer should be printed for the use of the people, and copies of it handed to all, that they may say it daily after Holy Communion or at their evening prayers.

233. Once the practice of daily Communion is established in a church, it is the parish priest's duty to keep it vigorous by every means in his power, being always ready to attend the confessional when required. He ought also to take the occasion of their first Communion to exhort children to the frequent reception of this most Holy Sacrament.

XV

INDULGENCES GRANTED TO SUCH AS RECITE THE FOLLOWING PRAYER TO PROMOTE THE PRACTICE OF DAILY COMMUNION.

234. In an audience held on May 30, 1905, our most Holy Father Pius X. granted 300 days' indulgence once a day to all the faithful who recite the following prayer, and to those who recite it daily a plenary indulgence once a month on the day of their choice, provided after confession and Communion they visit a church or public oratory, and pray for the intention of the Holy Father. These indulgences are applicable to the souls of the departed.

"O most sweet Jesus, who didst come into this world to bestow upon us the life of grace, and who to preserve and nourish it dost deign to be not only the daily medicine of our frailties but also our daily bread, humbly we beseech thee by thy Heart inflamed with love of us that thou wouldst pour out upon us all thy Holy Spirit that those who are in the wretched state of mortal sin, returning to thee, may recover their supernatural life, and those who by thy mercy still possess that life may every day, if possible, approach thy Holy Table, there to find the remedy against their venial faults, and thus increasing in grace and purifying their souls may attain to the possession of thee in life everlasting. Amen."

APPENDICES

I

Letter from the Sacred Congregation of the Council to the Bishop of Brescia

Most Reverend Lord,

Your Lordship has consulted our most Holy Father and Lord, as to whether it should be suitable to fix definite days on which alone laymen might receive Holy Communion, since there are in that city and in the diocese married men, tradesmen, men not otherwise conspicuous among their fellows for piety of life, who often, or even daily, approach the Holy Table. His Holiness has commissioned the Sacred Congregation of the Council of Trent to examine the matter under consideration, and the decision agreed upon by unanimous consent of the Right Rev. Fathers is to the following effect.

Although frequent and even daily reception of the most Holy Sacrament has been always approved of by the Fathers and the Church, they have never laid down definite rules as to

how often in the month or in the week, the faithful should abstain from or receive the Holy Eucharist. Likewise the Council of Trent, bearing, no doubt, in mind the infirmity of human nature while expressing its desires, refrained from giving any prescription on the matter when it said "The Sacred Synod desires that all the faithful present at the Holy Sacrifice should partake of the Holy Eucharist."[1]

And this has not been done without reason. The manifold recesses of the human conscience and the distractions of those minds which are mostly occupied with things of this world are veiled from us, nor are the supernatural gifts which God bestows upon his children revealed to human eyes; consequently nothing can be pronounced by us as to the worthiness and purity of a soul and its fitness to receive daily the bread of life.

Therefore, with regard to frequent reception of this heavenly food in the case of business men it rests with the confessor, to whom the secrets of their hearts are unfolded, to give the final decision. He may advise in each individual case, to married men and tradesmen, what he thinks most suitable for their spiritual welfare according to their purity of conscience, the profit they derive from frequent Communion, and the progress they make in virtue.

Besides, in dealing with married people, he has to warn them that if the Apostle did not allow them to "defraud one another, except,

[1] Sess. 22, cap. 6.

perhaps, by consent for a time that they may give themselves to prayer," how much more reverence towards the most Holy Eucharist requires them to observe continency that they may partake with undefiled souls of this heavenly banquet.

Rather than deter the faithful from frequent or daily Communion by laying down a rigid rule or fixing certain days on which alone access to the Holy Table may be permitted, your pastoral efforts should be directed to examining each individual case, and your Lordship or parish priests and confessors should allow what they consider suitable under the circumstances. Care should be taken that no one be deterred from frequent or even daily Communion, that each one may partake of the sweetness of the Body of the Lord, more or less frequently according to the measure of his devotion and fitting preparation.

With regard to the question proposed by your Lordship as to those nuns who desire to receive the Holy Communion daily, they are to be advised to communicate on the days appointed by the rules of their Order. But, if there are some so conspicuous by purity of conscience or fervour of soul that they are considered worthy of the daily reception of this Sacrament, it may be permitted to them by their superiors.

It will be well to enlist the help of preachers as well as that of confessors and parish priests, and impress upon them that whenever they exhort the faithful to frequent Communion, as

it is their duty to do, they should insist on the careful preparation required for the reception of the most Holy Sacrament. Likewise they must strive to bring home to those, either business men or married men, who are desirous to receive daily this heavenly food, a profound knowledge of their unworthiness, fear of the divine judgments, and reverence towards the most Holy Eucharist where Christ is given to us. And those who do not find themselves duly prepared for its reception are to be admonished to abstain.

Your Lordship has to thank God that devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament has become so widespread in your city and diocese, and you should encourage such sentiments, though using at the same time the means which prudence and good judgment suggest in order to prevent excesses, and your pastoral efforts should be directed to removing by every possible means all abuses in the reception of Christ's Body, and to insuring that frequent access to the Holy Table will bring forth abundant fruits of virtue in the souls of communicants.

It will be so if those who "inspired by divine grace wish to fortify their souls with this bread of life, conscious of their unworthiness, foster in their hearts charity and fear of God." We beseech our Lord Jesus Christ who gave Himself to the faithful as a ransom for their sins, and nourishment for their souls, and will give Himself as a reward for their merits in heaven to grant them His grace that they may acquire due

dispositions for a worthy reception of this Sacrament. May God preserve your Lordship for the fulfilment of this and other pastoral duties.

ROME,
January 24, 1587.

II

Decree "Cum ad aures"

Our most Holy Father and Lord has been informed by the testimony of trustworthy persons, that the faithful in some dioceses receive the Eucharist every day, even on Good Friday, and maintain that daily Communion is prescribed by divine law. Likewise, abuses have been introduced in the administration of this Sacrament. Some receive the Eucharist at home in their private oratories, or even in bed, though they are not dangerously ill, and they keep for that purpose the Blessed Sacrament in their pockets inclosed in silver pyxes, or ask priests to bring it secretly to them. Others receive several particles at the same time, or hosts of unusual size, and finally many confess their venial faults to priests not approved by the Ordinary. His Holiness has commissioned the Sacred Congregation of the Council of Trent to examine the matter under consideration, and the decision agreed upon by unanimous consent of the Right Rev. Fathers is to the following effect.

Although frequent and even daily reception

of the most Holy Sacrament has been always approved of by the Fathers and the Church, they have never laid down definite rules as to how often in the month or in the week the faithful should abstain from or to receive the Holy Eucharist. Likewise, the Council of Trent bearing no doubt in mind the infirmity of human nature while expressing its desires, refrained from giving any prescription on the matter when it said: "The Sacred Synod desires that all the faithful present at the Holy Sacrifice should partake of the Holy Eucharist."[1]

And this has not been done without reason. The manifold recesses of the human conscience and the distractions of those minds which are mostly occupied with things of this world are veiled from us, nor are the supernatural gifts which God bestows upon his children revealed to human eyes; consequently nothing can be pronounced by us as to the worthiness and purity of a soul and its fitness to receive daily the bread of life.

Therefore, with regard to frequent reception of this heavenly food in the case of business men, it rests with the confessor to whom the secrets of their hearts are unfolded, to give the final decision. He may advise in each individual case to married men and tradesmen what he thinks more suitable for their spiritual welfare according to their purity of conscience, the profit they derive from frequent Communion and the progress they make in virtue.

[1] Sess. 22, cap. 6.

Besides that, in dealing with married people, he has to warn them that if the Apostle did not allow them to "defraud one another except, perhaps, by consent for a time that they may give themselves to prayer," how much more reverence towards the most Holy Eucharist requires them to observe continency, that they may partake with undefiled souls of this heavenly banquet.

Rather than deter the faithful from frequent or daily Communion by laying down a rigid rule or fixing certain days on which alone access to the Holy Table may be permitted, the pastoral efforts of the bishops or parish priests and confessors should be directed to examining each individual case, and they should allow what they consider suitable under the circumstances. Care should be taken that no one be deterred from frequent or even daily Communion, that each one may partake of the sweetness of the Body of the Lord more or less frequently, according to the measure of his devotion and fitting preparation.

With regard to those nuns who desire to receive daily Holy Communion, they are to be advised to communicate on the days appointed by the rules of their Order. But if there are some so conspicuous by purity of conscience, or fervour of soul that they are considered worthy of the daily reception of this Sacrament, it may be permitted to them by their superiors.

It will be well to enlist the help of preachers as well as that of confessors and parish priests,

and impress upon them that whenever they exhort the faithful to frequent Communion, as it is their duty to do, they should insist on the careful preparation required for the reception of the most Holy Sacrament.

Likewise, they must strive to bring home to those, either business men or married men, who are desirous to receive daily this heavenly food a profound knowledge of their unworthiness, fear of the divine judgment, and reverence towards the most Holy Eucharist where Christ is given to us, and those who do not find themselves duly prepared for its reception are to be admonished to abstain.

The bishops have to thank God that devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament has become so widespread in their cities and dioceses, and encourage such feelings, though using at the same time the means which prudence and good judgment suggest in order to prevent excesses, and their pastoral efforts should be directed to removing by every possible means all abuses in the reception of Christ's Body, and to insuring that frequent access to the Holy Table will bring forth abundant fruits of virtue in the souls of communicants.

It will be so if those who, inspired by divine grace, wish to fortify their souls with this bread of life, conscious of their unworthiness, foster in their hearts charity and fear of God. We beseech our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself to the faithful as a ransom for their sins and nourishment for their souls, and will give Himself

as a reward for their merits in heaven, to grant them His grace, that they may acquire due dispositions for a worthy reception of this Sacrament.

Moreover, bishops and parish priests and confessors must refute those who declare that daily Communion is prescribed by divine law, and teach the faithful that the Eucharist may be received from the hands of the priest in churches and in private oratories only when such a privilege has been granted by the Holy See. Priests are in no wise to carry it secretly in their pockets to those who are confined to their beds, but when Communion is to be administered to the sick who cannot go to church to receive it, it must be carried publicly and solemnly according to the prescriptions of the Roman Ritual. Likewise if the Sacrament is taken from private oratories it must be done in a becoming manner. Care should be taken that, with regard to Holy Communion on Good Friday, the rubrics of the Missal and the customs of the Roman Church are observed. No priest is allowed to give the same person several particles at the same time, nor hosts of unusual size. Finally, priests not approved by the ordinary are not to hear confessions of venial sins. Let those parish priests and confessors, even regulars who should dare to act otherwise, remember that they have to render account to Almighty God, nor will bishops and ordinaries lack powers to inflict rigorous punishments on contraveners though they be regulars, even of the Society

of Jesus, as the present decree confers upon the bishops all faculties required for that effect.

His Holiness having received a detailed information of the contents of this decree, has approved it and ordered it to be printed and published.

Given at Rome, Feb. 12, 1679.

III

Yearly Triduum for the Propagation of Daily Communion

On April 10, 1907, the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences addressed a circular to the bishops of the Catholic world, informing them that it was His Holiness' earnest desire that every year a triduum for the propagation of daily Communion should be held in all cathedrals, within the octave of the feast of Corpus Christi, or at any other suitable time. The services during the triduum are to be conducted more or less as those celebrated by the Eucharistic League. Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are the days appointed for these services. There will be a sermon on each day dealing with the excellency of the Holy Eucharist, and the preparation required for its reception, and after the sermon and before Benediction the prayer for the propagation of daily Communion is to be said. On Sunday morning during the Mass, the parish priest shall preach a sermon on the Gospel of the Sunday within the octave of Corpus Christi, or if the triduum takes place at any other time, on a subject connected with the Holy Eucharist. There will be general Communion at that Mass. The evening service will be the same as on the previous days, except only that the *Te Deum* is to be sung before the *Tantum ergo*.

Parish priests are desired to have similar services in their churches at least on the Sunday, with the approval of course of the ordinary.

His Holiness has granted the following indulgences applicable to the souls of the departed, in order to draw the faithful to assist at these services.

First, seven years and seven quarantines on each day of the triduum.

Secondly, a plenary indulgence may be gained once during the triduum by those who attend all the services, and after confession and Communion pray for the intention of our most Holy Father.

Thirdly, a plenary indulgence is also granted to those who, having confessed and communicated at the general Communion in the cathedral or church where the services of the triduum have been celebrated, pray for the intention of the Holy Father.

N.B.—Therefore (*a*) All those who attend the services of the triduum, and confess and communicate twice, namely, on the Sunday and on either of the previous days, may gain two plenary indulgences. (*b*) We think that being present at the morning service on the Sunday is not required to gain the indulgence under *n.* 2. (*c*) Likewise, by merely communicating at the general Communion the indulgence under *n.* 3 may be gained. (*d*) Those who receive Holy Communion five times a week are dispensed from confession according to the decree quoted above.

IV

Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve

Privilege granted to all pious and religious institutes to celebrate three midnight Masses, and distribute Holy Communion on Christmas night.—Thursday, *August* 1, 1907.

Our most Holy Father and Lord Pius X., by divine providence Pope, wishing to promote devotion among the faithful, and impress upon their minds a sense of gratitude for the ineffable mystery of the incarnation of the Divine Word, has *motu proprio* graciously conceded, in the usual audience granted to the Rev. Father and Lord Assessor of the Holy Office, that in future every year on Christmas Eve the three liturgical Masses, or one only, if circumstances demand it, may be celebrated at midnight, *servatis servandis*, and likewise that Holy Communion may be distributed to those who out of their devotion desire it, in all convents of enclosed nuns, and in other religious institutes, pious houses, and seminaries of clerics in which public oratories have been erected with faculty to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in them. It is His Holiness' wish to have it expressly declared that the faithful

may fulfil the ecclesiastical precept by devoutly attending any of these Masses. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding. Peter Palombelli, S.R.N.I. (*Acta S. Sedis*, vol. 40, p. 478).

Commentary.

1. Those who are entitled to the above privilege are the following: (*a*) All monasteries, convents, and houses of regulars of both sexes; (*b*) All congregations with simple vows, although they be merely approved by the ordinary and not by the Pope, since all are comprehended in the category of religious institutes; (*c*) All seminaries of clerics.

2. A difficulty may arise from the words *piis domibus*, which seem to imply that the privilege in question is to be extended to those pious institutes or associations, *Piæ sodalitates*, improperly called religious, because their members do not take the three essential vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, or if they do, the vows are either temporary or private, and not publicly approved by the Church. The heading of the document already quoted, although it was not meant to be comprehensive, since seminaries are not mentioned in it, is in favour of this view. Therefore, it seems that there is no room for doubt that the aforesaid associations have the right to share in the privileges of this concession.

3. We can attach to the words *piis domibus*, the same meaning which Canon Law gives to

the words *religiosis domibus*,[1] and in such a case all hospitals, orphanages, etc., would be comprehended in the text of the above document in so far as they have been erected by the ecclesiastical authorities, although they be not under the immediate direction of a religious community. This opinion is not altogether ungrounded. Finally, if the words *piis domibus* are interpreted in the same sense adscribed by Canon Law to the words *piis locis*,[2] they will apply to those hospitals, orphanages, etc., even when they are not founded or controlled by the ordinary. This seems a less probable opinion.

4. The associations comprehended in the text of the said concession can only make use of it in those oratories, either public or private, which enjoy the right of habitually reserving the Blessed Sacrament.

5. What has been said of public oratories applies to churches attached to convents or religious houses. The faculty to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in oratories or churches is given by common ecclesiastical law to religious communities properly so-called, namely, to those in which the individuals take solemn vows.[3] In the case of religious congregations, pious associations, or seminaries, a special permission is required to use the privilege in question.

6. It seems probable that if there are different

[1] Decretal, lib. 3, tit. 36.

[2] Fagnanus, Reiffenstuel, tit. 36, l. 3; Decretal; Ojetti V. Loca pia.

[3] S. C. of Rites, April 16, 1644; *D. auth.*, *n.* 860.

oratories in the same religious house in which the conditions required are fulfilled, midnight Mass on Christmas Eve may be celebrated in all of them.

7. As the oratories erected by religious communities are considered as semi-public by the S. C. of Rites,[1] we must assume that by the words private oratories there is meant in the present document those secondary oratories belonging to religious communities with simple vows, which according to the same S. C. of Rites have the character of private ones.

8. When permission is given to celebrate the three Masses allowed by the rubrics, or only one, it is understood that only one priest may celebrate in the same oratory at midnight. Those priests who enjoy the privilege of always saying the Mass of Our Lady are not permitted to celebrate more than one Mass.[2]

9. As there is nothing in the present concession to indicate that one at least of the three Masses must be a high Mass, we are justified in concluding that the three may be low Masses. This is also implied in the concession to celebrate them in private oratories, where according to the common law of the Church high Mass may not be sung. But it will be more in conformity with the rubrics, if the first is a high Mass, when celebrated in public oratories, and this could be done as well in private oratories, which for the

[1] *D. auth.*, *n.* 4007.

[2] S. C. of Rites, April 11, 1840 ; *D. auth.*, *nn.* 2802, ad. 3, 3146, ad. 6.

present occasion are considered as public in the decree.

10. It was formerly permitted to celebrate only one high Mass at midnight. The other two ought to be celebrated in the morning, so that the priest who sang high Mass at midnight was not entitled to proceed to the celebration of the other two.[1]

11. The words *servatis servandis*, allude to the regulations prescribed by the rubrics, and by other decrees on the subject. When only one Mass is celebrated at midnight, this must be the first of the three which the Missal assigns for Christmas Day. In the case in which a priest celebrates three Masses he is not to purify the chalice in either of the first two, but after receiving the Precious Blood, and without covering the chalice with the purificator, he says the prayer *Quod ore*, with his hands joined before his breast, and washes the tips of his fingers in a vessel prepared for the occasion,[2] saying *Corpus tuum*, etc. All other regulations for the case in which the other two Masses are to be celebrated on the next morning at the same or at any other altar must be observed.[3] The practice of starting Mass so far in advance of midnight as to allow the consecration to take place after the stroke of twelve, or even to bring the gospel to about that time, is condemned as an abuse.[4] The prayers after

[1] S. C. of Rites, November 14, 1676; *D. auth.*, *n.* 1584, ad. 2.
[2] February 6, 1892; *D. auth.*, *n.* 3764.
[3] *D. auth.*, *n.* 2520.
[4] May 11, 1878; *D. auth.*, *n.* 3448, ad. 15.

Mass are to be said at the end of the last, if it is a low Mass. They will be omitted in the case in which the last Mass or the only one celebrated is a high Mass.[1]

12. There is nothing established regarding the rules of fasting for those who have to celebrate Mass or to receive Holy Communion at midnight. Strictly speaking, it will be enough to observe the usual fast from 12 P.M. But reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament requires us to go a little further on this point. A. de Herdt[2] thinks it advisable to abstain both from food and drink from 6 P.M. Noldin[3] gives 8 P.M. as the time from which the fast is to be kept. It agrees with the views of Leo. XIII., who in 1885, when granting permission to have Masses celebrated at Lourdes after midnight, imposed as a condition that the priest should remain fasting for four hours before the Holy Sacrifice.

13. The permission to receive Holy Communion at midnight is a real privilege. The common law of the Church forbids it, so that before the present decree even members of religious communities could not receive Holy Communion in their oratories without special faculty.[4] According to the present concession Holy Communion may be given to any person

[1] April 30, 1889, May 10, 1895; *D. auth.*, *nn.* 3705, 3855, ad. 7; *D. auth.*, *n.* 3936.

[2] *Sacræ Liturgiæ Praxis*, vol. 3, *n.* 7.

[3] *De Sacramentis*, *n.* 145.

[4] S. C. of Rites; *D. auth.*, *nn.* 781, 1761, 2086.

who asks for it, either religious or layman, subject or not to the superior of the oratory.

14. When the Pope says that by hearing these Masses the ecclesiastical precept may be fulfilled, he grants this privilege to private oratories. It existed before with regard to public and semi-public ones.[1]

[1] S. C. of Rites, January 23, 1899; *D. auth.*, *n.* 4002.

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